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HORROR**

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WITHIN THE TOMB

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GODDESS**

**MILLION YEAR
MONSTER**

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SHOCK

CHILLING TALES OF HORROR AND SUSPENSE

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YOU'VE WAITED FOR IT, DEAR READER, AND HERE IT IS! ANOTHER **CLUTCHING HAND** STORY--A STORY OF DEATH AND DESOLATION IN WHICH DEAD MEN RISE AND STALK THE EARTH!--READY TO HEAR IT? ALL COMFY? THEN TAKE YOUR LAST LOOK AT THE BLUE SKY AND GOLDEN SUNSET--CHANGE THE CLEAR, COOL AIR FOR THE DANK ATMOSPHERE OF THE TOMB--AND SHUDDER TO THE CREEPY CHALLENGE OF--

YAWNING GRAVES!



1800--NEW ENGLAND--AS YOUNG DR. AMOS FRISBY WORKED ON A CHERISHED EXPERIMENT--



EUREKA! I-I THINK I'VE GOT IT!

HE COULDN'T WAIT TO BREAK THE GOOD NEWS TO PEGGY DALTON, HIS FIANCEE--

IT'S A POTION WHICH WILL ALLOW **ETERNAL LIFE**, PEGGY--AND I THINK I'VE GOT IT PERFECTED! IF-- IF ONLY THERE WERE SOMEONE TO **TRY IT ON!**

THERE IS, AMOS-- **ME!** YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME-- BECAUSE I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!



AMOS KNEW THAT HE OUGHT TO REFUSE! BUT HE WAS FIRED WITH ENTHUSIASM--AND SO SURE THAT THE NEW POTION WOULD WORK--

ALL RIGHT, PEG-- TO YOU GOES THE HONOR OF THE FIRST ATTEMPT!

YOU TAKE SOME RIGHT AFTER ME! WE'LL SPEND ETERNAL LIFE **TOGETHER!**



AH, BUT IT WAS **IRONIC**, WHAT HAPPENED THEN! SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG IN THE UNTESTED POTION! A MOMENT AFTER THE LOVELY GIRL HAD SWALLOWED IT--



AI-EEEEEE! HELP ME, AMOS-- HELP ME! I'M--BURNING ALIVE! ARRGH--

SUMMONED BY HER DYING
SCREAMS, PEOPLE FOUND---



SHE'S--DEAD!
HEAVEN HELP
ME--FOR IT
WAS I WHO
KILLED HER!

JAIL--THE ROTTING TORTURE OF
A 50-YEAR TERM! AND AS HIS
YOUTH WASTED BEHIND BARS---

IF--IF ONLY I CAN KEEP MY
SANITY UNTIL I'M FREE! I'LL
PERFECT MY POTION THEN--
IN PEGGY'S MEMORY! AND
I'LL SHOW THOSE DOGS WHO
PUT ME HERE....



BUT IT WAS AN OLD AND DEMENTED
MAN WHOM THEY FINALLY RELEASED--
LAUGHED AT BY EVERYBODY--HATING
EVERYBODY--

THERE'S
CRAZY OLD
FRISBY!

HELLO,
GRANDPOP!
STILL GOING
TO MAKE
EVERYBODY
LIVE
FOREVER?

I--I'LL
HAVE
MY
REVENGE
ON THEM
ALL--I
SWEAR
IT!



HE WOULD RETURN TO HIS
CONTINUAL EXPERIMENTS
THEN--AND FORGET EVERY-
THING IN THE FEVER OF HIS
ETERNAL QUEST--

HA-HA! THIS DEAD
CAT OUGHT TO STIR
HIM UP A BIT!



THOSE CRUEL LITTLE RASCALS
-- I'LL HAVE TO MAKE MORE
OF THE NEW FLUID NOW! I--
WAIT! THE ANIMAL'S BODY--
DIDN'T IT SEEM TO--STIR?



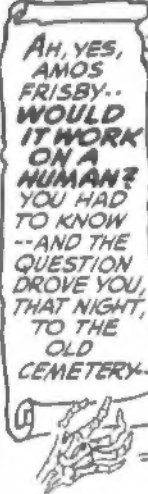
AH, YES, AMOS--IT DID SEEM
TO MOVE A LITTLE, DIDN'T IT?
AND THE NEXT MOMENT--IT
DID MORE THAN THAT!

IT--IT'S GETTING UP!
AN OLD ANIMAL CORPSE--
ALIVE AGAIN!

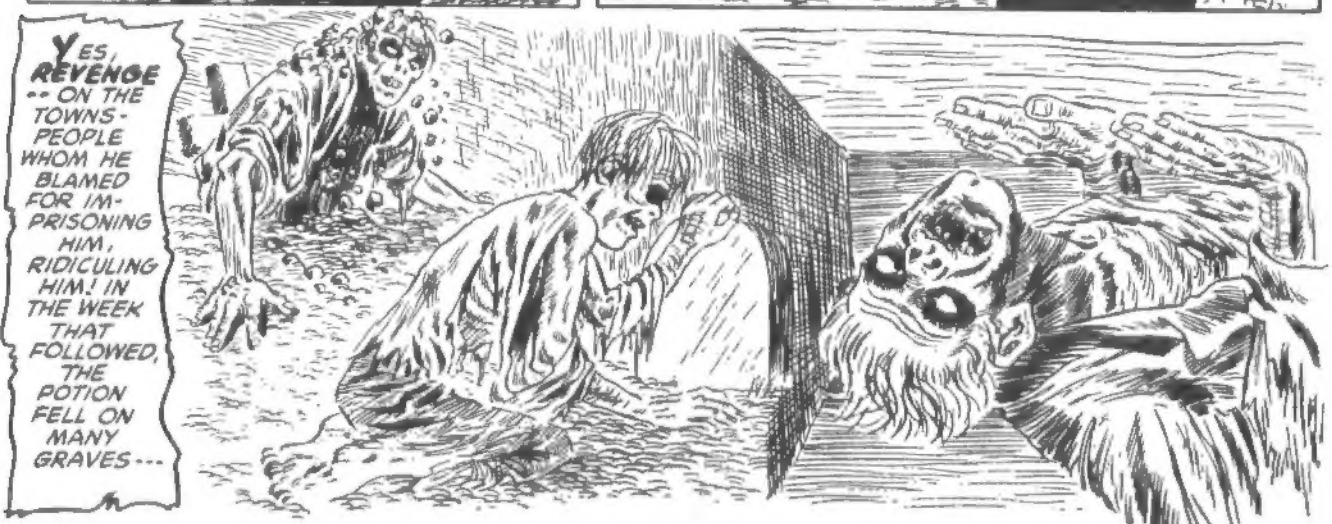


GET BACK, YOU--
DEVIL!





NEXT MOMENT--



THE FIRST PART OF OLD AMOS'S FIENDISH PLAN WAS COMPLETE NOW! A COMPANY OF CORPSES HAD BEEN ASSEMBLED TO DO HIS BIDDING--



WE--BEG YOU--
LET US--RETURN--
TO THE EARTH!

WE ARE WEARY--
FOR THE PEACE--
DEATH GAVE US!

NO--THERE IS
WORK FOR YOU!
REMEMBER THAT
I AM YOUR MASTER,
AND YOU MUST DO
MY BIDDING! HERE'S
WHAT I WANT YOU
TO DO---



AND SO--

RAP!
RAP!

BETTER SEE
WHO'S AT THE
DOOR, EPHRAIM!



OH, GOOD LORD
--N-NO!



AARRGH!

GR-RRR....

IT WAS HAPPENING
THROUGHOUT THE
TOWN--IN SCENES
OF AWFUL HORROR--

NO, NO--
PLEASE---
AI-EEEE!



THE MURDEROUS RAIDS
CONTINUED! OBJECTS: REVENGE
--AND GAIN!



AH, YOU'VE DONE
YOUR JOBS WELL!
YOU'VE BROUGHT
ME THE TOWN'S
WEALTH---

AND YOU'VE
HAD--YOUR
REVENGE!
CAN WE NOT
--RETURN TO
OUR REST--
NOW?



NO--NOT YET--NOT
UNTIL I HAVE THE
WEALTH OF A KING!
TONIGHT I MYSELF
SHALL LEAD YOU, MY
PRETTY ONES--TO A PLACE
WHERE
THERE'S
MUCH
GOLD---



THERE IT IS!
THERE'S MONEY
AND JEWELS
APLENTY HIDDEN
IN THERE,
I'LL WARRANT!

YOU
WANT
US--TO
BREAK
INTO A
CHURCH?

DESPOIL
A SACRED
PLACE?
COMMIT
SACRI-
LEGE?

YOU'LL DO AS I SAY! AM I NOT YOUR MASTER, YOU WALKING CLODS?

YOU-- WERE-- UNTIL YOU MADE --THE MISTAKE-- OF LEADING US-- ONTO HALLOWED GROUND!

THIS WAS REVOLT--REBELLION FROM BEYOND DEATH ITSELF!

KEEP-- BACK! WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?

YOU MADE US-- LEAVE OUR GRAVES!

YOU MADE US-- ROB! YOU MADE US-- KILL!

YOUR POWER OVER US--IS GONE --HERE!

IT WAS THEN THAT OLD AMOS FELT THE CLUTCHING HAND OF THE TOMB--

NO! NO! LET ME G-GO!

THEY BORE HIM, STRUGGLING, TO AN OPEN GRAVE THE GRAVE-DIGGERS HAD LEFT! IT HAD BEEN INTENDED FOR A DIFFERENT CORPSE-- BUT NOW--

DON'T! I-- I'LL FREE YOU-- GIVE YOU ALL MY TREASURE--

NO! NO!

THUD!

THEY--THEY'RE FILLING THE GRAVE --BURYING ME ALIVE! A-EEEE!

HE'S STOPPED-- STRUGGLING NOW! HIS LIFE --IS DONE!

AND NOW-- WE CAN REST!

YES--THEY COULD REST NOW! THE TORTURED SLAVERY WAS DONE WITH! ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS A PILE OF ANCIENT BONES--OVER THE GRAVE WHICH HAD CHOKED OUT THE LIFE OF OLD AMOS FRISBY!

THE END

The HIDDEN HORROR



THERE WAS MORE THAN A GHOST IN THE OLD HOUSE EVERYBODY SHUNNED -- MORE THAN A MUSTY REMINDER OF WITCHCRAFT AND AN EVIL THAT HAD SURVIVED THE GRAVE! IT WAS SOMETHING THAT WAITED IN MUFFLED DARKNESS -- SOMETHING THAT LINKED CRIES OF ANGUISH WITH **THE HIDDEN HORROR!**

IN A SMALL NEW ENGLAND VILLAGE --

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MR. HOLMES-- NO VACANT HOUSES FOR RENT IN THIS AREA? WHAT ABOUT THAT OLD HOUSE SIX MILES FROM HERE?

ONLY TRIED TO LET YOU DOWN EASY, SON! IT'S THE KIND OF HOUSE THAT SPELLS POISON TO REAL ESTATE MEN-- **BECAUSE IT'S HAUNTED!**

IT WAS BUILT EXACTLY **THREE HUNDRED YEARS** AGO-- BY A MAN SAID TO BE AN EVIL WIZARD! HE WAS BURNED AT THE STAKE DURING THE WITCHCRAFT TRIALS -- AND WHAT WITH LOCAL SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT THE HOLD EVIL BEINGS KEEP ON ANY PLACE THEY'VE INHABITED -- THE HOUSE HAS BEEN UNOCCUPIED EVER SINCE!



IT'S NO USE, BILL! WE-- WE JUST CAN'T FIND A PLACE TO LIVE!

I CAN SEE WHAT YOU KIDS ARE UP AGAINST! TELL YOU WHAT-- IF YOU CAN STAY IN THAT PLACE FOR **JUST ONE NIGHT**, AND PROVE THAT IT **ISN'T** HAUNTED-- IT'LL BE WORTH MY WHILE TO GIVE YOU A YEAR'S RENT **FREE!**

AND SO, LATER--

PEOPLE ARE FUNNY, MARGE! SURE, THEY'RE POSITIVE THE PLACE IS HAUNTED-- BUT I'D LIKE TO FIND SOMEONE WHO HAS ACTUALLY **SEEN** A GHOST HERE!



TEN HOURS UNTIL DAWN-- IN A TERRIFYING PLACE LIKE THIS! BILL... THERE'S SOMETHING HERE-- SOME PRESENCE-- THAT **SCARES** ME!

COME ON, HONEY-- FORGET IT! THIS PLACE WILL BE DOWNRIGHT CHEERFUL ONCE WE HAVE A FIRE GOING!



SUDDENLY--

GOOD GOSH-- WHAT'S THAT?

DON'T ASK ME! IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM THE FLOOR-- **BUT I CAN'T SEE A THING!**



JUST A FEW YARDS AWAY-- HIDDEN IN THE LURKING SHADOWS--

IN THE NAME OF TOPHET AND ALL THAT IS UNHOLY-- **LET A RAT COME FORTH!**

BY THE DEVIL'S DAM-- THE SPIRITS OF MY VICTIMS ARE TRYING TO WARN THEM! I WILL USE MY BLACK MAGIC-- AND TRICK THESE TWO INTO THINKING THAT **ANY-THING** THAT HAPPENS IS DUE TO **NATURAL CAUSES!**



BILL-- THERE'S THAT HOLLOW NOISE AGAIN! RELAX, HONEY! **ANY-THING** PASSING ACROSS THESE SAGGING FLOOR BOARDS WOULD MAKE A RACKET-- AND THIS TIME IT'S JUST A RAT!





I DON'T KNOW... THIS PLACE MAY SEEM EMPTY-- BUT I'M SURE IT'S ALIVE WITH STRANGE FORCES! IT ISN'T THAT I SENSE ANYTHING EVIL-- JUST A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO CONVEY SOME KIND OF MESSAGE!

MARGE, THERE'S NOTHING SUBTLE ABOUT GHOSTS! IF THERE WERE ANY SKULKING AROUND HERE-- THEY'D LET US KNOW BY DOING SOMETHING DEFINITE!



IN THE NEXT SECOND-- LIKE A CANDLE FLAME SNUFFED OUT BY AN INVISIBLE HAND--

HOLY MACKEREL-- WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE FIRE?



THE SPIRITS HAVE GIVEN THEM ANOTHER HINT OF DANGER-- BUT I WILL OFFSET THAT! BY THE FIENDS BELOW-- LET WATER FLOW!



PERFECTLY NATURAL CAUSES! THAT'S RAIN WATER THAT HAD COLLECTED IN THE BLOCKED CHIMNEY-- ONLY TO TRICKLE DOWN WHEN THE FLAMES BURNED AWAY THE SOOT! WE JUST DIDN'T HAPPEN TO NOTICE IT DRIPPING-- UNTIL IT STIFLED THE FIRE!



I WON'T DENY THIS PLACE MAY HAVE A GRIM REPUTATION, MARGE-- BUT WHY GO INTO A STATE ABOUT THINGS THAT CAN BE READILY EXPLAINED?

BILL, I WONDER IF YOU HAVEN'T EXPLAINED THINGS TOO READILY? HAVE YOU NOTICED OUR FOOT-PRINTS?



THEY'RE ALL OVER THE ROOM-- CLEARLY VISIBLE ON THE DUSTY FLOOR! BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE THAT SHOULD HAVE LEFT TRACKS-- AND IT DIDN'T!

YEP--THE RAT!



GREAT GUNS-- THERE SHOULD BE SOME KIND OF TRAIL! I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT!

IT CAN'T BE FIGURED OUT-- UNLESS WE'RE READY TO FACE THE TRUTH! THIS HOUSE BRIMS WITH A HIDDEN HORROR-- AND WE'RE GETTING CLOSER TO IT EVERY MINUTE WE STAY!

I WON'T TRY TO TALK YOU OUT OF IT, HONEY-- BECAUSE I'M BEGINNING TO HAVE A FEW DOUBTS MYSELF! EVEN IF WE DID MANAGE TO STAY HERE THE ENTIRE NIGHT, I COULDN'T EXPECT YOU TO LIVE HERE-- SO THERE'S NO POINT IN STICKING AROUND!

I WAS WAITING TO CATCH THEM IN AN UNSUSPECTING MOMENT-- BUT NOW I MUST WREAK MY TERROR OPENLY-- BEFORE THEY LEAVE!

BILL-- BILL-- WHAT IS IT?

IN A VOICE CHILL AS A WIND SWEEPING A WINTRY GRAVEYARD--

THIS HOUSE A PIT OF FEAR SHALL BE AS LONG AS ONCE A CENTURY IT KNOWS AN ANGUISHED CRY THAT FALLS TO MARK SLOW DEATH WITHIN ITS WALLS!



DEATH! BILL-- THAT HIDEOUS THING ISN'T GOING TO LET US GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE!

HONEY-- WE'RE GOING TO REACH THE DOOR-- EVEN IF IT MEANS BARGING CLEAN THROUGH THAT THING!

IN THE NEXT SECOND-- AS THE GHOSTLY HAND MOTIONS IN THE GLOOM--

NOW THAT DEATH IS SURE TO STRIKE LET HIM LEARN WHAT IT IS LIKE!

GOOD LORD-- I'M IN A COFFIN! IT'S A SPECTRAL, UNREAL THING-- BUT I CAN'T GET OUT!

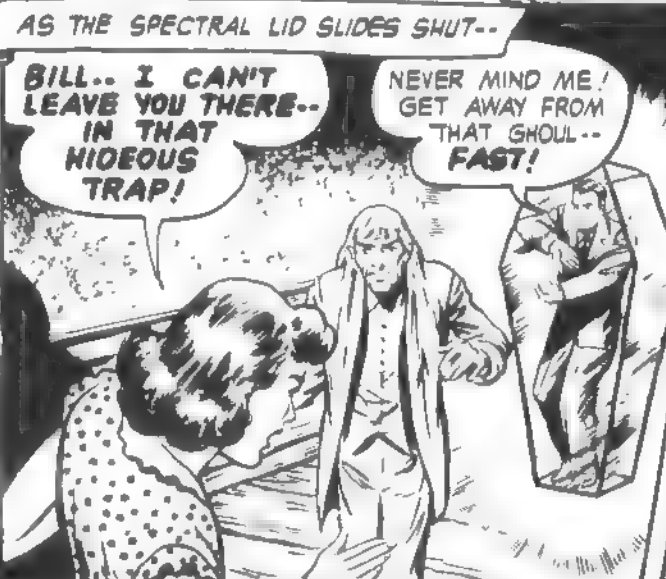


AS THE SPECTRAL LID SLIDES SHUT--

BILL-- I CAN'T LEAVE YOU THERE-- IN THAT HIDEOUS TRAP!

NEVER MIND ME! GET AWAY FROM THAT GHOUL-- FAST!

I'VE GOT TO RUN SOMEWHERE! IF THAT THING GETS ANY CLOSER-- I'LL BE TOO TERRIFIED TO MOVE!





THE PHANTOM'S RIGHT BEHIND ME! BUT EVEN A CELLAR MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF DOOR OR WINDOW--**ANYTHING** TO GET ME OUT INTO THE OPEN!



THANK HEAVEN-- THERE **IS** A WAY OUT!

HAA!
YES-- A WAY OUT OF LIFE!



OH! I'VE BEEN TRICKED INTO ENTERING A TINY VAULT-- AND THE SLAB'S SWINGING SHUT AGAIN!

SHUT-- FOREVER!



**HAAA
HA HA
HA!**

SLAM!

AS THE HIDEOUS FIGURE DWINDLES--

ANOTHER VICTIM-- ANOTHER CENTURY OF TERROR! NOW I CAN FADE BACK INTO THE SHADOWS-- AND LET HER FRIEND SEARCH IN A RISING FRENZY-- WHILE SHE FACES THE ORDEAL OF A CREEPING DEATH!



IN THE SWEATERING CONFINES--

NOW I KNOW THE MEANING OF THE DREAD I FELT WHEN WE CAME HERE! BILL'S IN A COFFIN-- I'M IN A TOMB-- AND WE'LL NEVER ESCAPE!



BUT AT THAT MOMENT--

**I CAME CLOSE TO SUFFOCATING-- BUT THAT SPECTRAL COFFIN'S GONE! IT WAS MEANT TO HOLD ME JUST LONG ENOUGH TO LET THAT FIEND STALK AFTER HIS REAL VICTIM--
MARGE!**



THEN-- AS THE DREAD SHAPE ENTERS--

BY THE
NETHER
FIRES--
HE'S
RELEASED
THEM!

HERE THAT, MARGE?
THESE MAY BE GHOSTS--
BUT WE'VE GOT
NOTHING TO FEAR!



AS THE SPECTRAL FIGURES CLOSE IN--

THEY'VE WAITED A
LONG TIME, MARGE--
AND NOW THEY'RE
GOING TO GET
THEIR REVENGE!

I WONDER NOW! SOME-
THING THAT EVIL ISN'T
EASILY DESTROYED--EVEN
BY SUPERNATURAL
BEINGS!



NO--NO! ANOTHER
CENTURY HAS COME
TO A CLOSE-- I
MUST FIND A
VICTIM--
TONIGHT!

NEVER-- DAYBREAK IS NEAR! NOW
THERE WILL BE ONLY **ONE**
HIDDEN HORROR IN THIS
HOUSE OF EVIL-- **YOU!**



PERISH--
AND LET YOUR
SOUL FADE INTO
PERDITION!

PERISH-- AND LET
YOUR BODY BECOME A
GRISLY REMINDER OF
WHAT YOU WERE!



THEN--

THE SPIRITS THAT SAVED
US ARE FADING! THEY
KNOW THAT FIEND IS
FINISHED, HONEY-- AND
I'M PRETTY SURE
THE PROOF WILL BE
RIGHT HERE--
**INSIDE THE
WALL!**

AS BILL OPENS THE SILENT VAULT--

GOOD HEAVENS! THAT'S
A PHANTOM
WAS THRUST IN
HERE ONLY A
MINUTE AGO--
AND NOW--
**IT'S A
SKELETON!**

THE GRISLY
REMINDER OF
WHAT THE GHOST
**WAS--THE EVIL
WIZARD MR. HOLMES
MENTIONED--
DEAD THREE
HUNDRED
YEARS!**

ABOUT MR.
HOLMES,
DARLING--
WE **DID**
STAY ALL
NIGHT-- BUT
CAN WE
HONESTLY
SAY THE
PLACE
ISN'T
HAUNTED?

I'M PRETTY SURE I
CAN CONVINCE MR.
HOLMES ABOUT **THAT!**
AND IF **YOU** NEED
FURTHER PROOF,
HONEY-- DON'T
FORGET WE'VE GOT
A WHOLE YEAR
AHEAD OF US--
RIGHT HERE!



THE
END

I'VE JUST GOTTEN A SUDDEN CALL TO RUSH OFF FOR A QUICK HANGING, READERS-- SO YOU CAN REGARD **THIS** STORY AS A SORT OF A BREATH-- **BETWEEN, GASPS!** IT'S A SHORT, TRAGIC TALE YOUR **EXECUTIONER** HAS FOR YOU THIS-TIME--A TERROR-TALE CALLED...

KEY TO A CORPSE!



AH, A HAPPY LITTLE FAMILY, THE **JONESSES!** HOW PAPA LOVED MAMMA--AND HIS DARLING LITTLE DAUGHTER **EDWINA**--

HERE'S WHAT I THINK OF YOU-- AN' THAT FEEBLE-MINDED BRAT O' YOURS THAT NEVER GREW UP!



AND SOMETIMES--WHEN HE WAS IN A **GOOD MOOD**--

I'M GONNA--**KILL YOU YET!** YA KNOW THAT, DON'TCHA?

PLEASE, DADDY, PLEASE! LET HER GO!



BUT WHEN THE TIME CAME IT WASN'T **MRS. JONES** WHO DID THE DYING! IT HAPPENED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, IN A SURGE OF FLAME GONE WILD--

HOLD--TIGHT TO ME, DARLING--



AND WHAT ABOUT THE **MASTER OF THE HOUSE?** IF YOU WANTED TO MAKE A GRIM JOKE, YOU COULD SAY HE WAS HOT UNDER THE COLLAR, BURNED UP ABOUT IT--

HELP! H-HELP! ARRGH!



STRANGE, WASN'T IT, THAT MR. JONES SHOULD BE **LOCKED IN**--AND THE **KEY MISSING!** IT SPELLED **FOUL PLAY** TO THE POLICE, WHICH IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING **MURDER!** AND WHO COULD BE GUILTY BUT THE WOMAN HE HAD TORTURED, THREATENED, MADE TO SUFFER THROUGH THE YEARS! AT THE TRIAL--WHILE I WAITED IN THE WINGS, IMPATIENT FOR A VICTIM FOR MY NOOSE--

SHE HAD THE MOTIVE--SHE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY--IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANYONE ELSE! WHO **ELSE** COULD HAVE LOCKED THAT DOOR--AND THEN REMOVED AND HIDDEN THE **KEY** WHILE A MAN DIED?



-- I SAW SOMETHING **ELSE!** A GIRL NAMED **EDWINA**, WHO HAD NEVER GROWN UP PLAYING WITH HER DOLL! AND AROUND THE NECK OF THAT DOLL, WHERE SHE HAD PLACED IT--



I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO SPOTTED IT--SO I MISSED OUT ON A VICTIM! YOU SEE, YOU CAN'T BRING **CRIMINAL CHARGES** AGAINST AN **INCOMPETENT!** BETTER HURRY ALONG NOW--THE **ZOMBIE'S** GOT A STORY TO TELL YOU THAT YOU **WONT WANT TO MISS!**



LURE OF THE SNAKE GODDESS

PAT-- LOOK!
THE STATUE OF
MAHRANA--
WE'VE
FOUND
IT!

DON'T TOUCH IT, SAHIB!
THAT STATUE CON-
TAINS THE LIFE
FORCE OF THE
SNAKE GODDESS!
TO OFFEND HER
MEANS
DEATH!

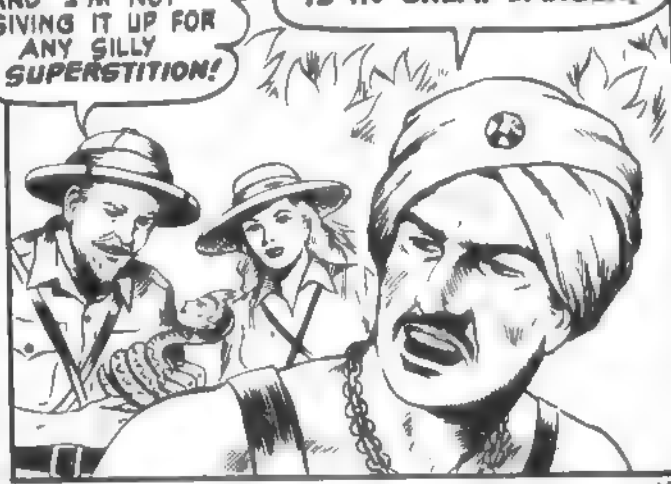
INDIA-- LAND OF MYSTERIOUS
GREEN JUNGLES AND BLACK
MAGIC! WHAT DO WE REALLY
KNOW ABOUT IT-- ITS SECRET
RITES AND STRANGE CUSTOMS?
WHAT PERILS AWAIT THE UNWARY
WHO DEFY ITS TIMELESS HAUNTS?
FOR THE HARROWING ANSWERS,
LET'S TREK TO THE LAND OF THE
SERPENT-- WORSHIPPING URDUS--
THERE TO SUCCUMB TO THE--
LURE OF THE SNAKE
GODDESS!

NONGENSE!
WHAT'S ALL
THIS
ABOUT,
NARI?

THIS IS WHAT KEEPS MAHRANA,
GODDESS OF THE SNAKES,
ALIVE! SHE WILL FOLLOW IT
ANYWHERE-- AND WILL KILL
TO GET IT BACK!

I'VE COMBED
THE WORLD
FOR THIS STATUE!
IT'S A GREAT ARCHEO-
LOGICAL DISCOVERY--
AND I'M NOT
GIVING IT UP FOR
ANY SILLY
SUPERSTITION!

THEN-- BE WARNED, SAHIB
BARNES-- MAHRANA CAN
TAKE THE SHAPE OF A
WOMAN, AT WILL! FROM
THIS MOMENT, YOUR LIFE
IS IN GREAT DANGER!



ITS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, THE EXPEDITION STARTED HOMEWARD! THE ROUTE WAS TREACHEROUS, THE PERILS GREAT, AND AFTER MANY DAYS OF BACK-BREAKING TRAVEL--

STOP! OUR PATH IS BLOCKED--
BY SNAKES--
HUNDREDS
OF THEM!



THEN, AS IF DIRECTED BY A HUMAN INTELLIGENCE, THE DEADLY SERPENTS ATTACKED!

THEY HAVE BEEN SENT BY
THE SNAKE GODDESS.
SAHIB! GIVE BACK
THE STATUE--
QUICKLY!

NO! WE'LL
FIGHT IT OUT!



AMID THE
CONFUSION--

MY SON! I-- I CAN'T
REACH HIM IN TIME!

FATHER!
HELP!



GOOD
SHOT,
PAT!

BRAHMA BE
THANKED-- HE
IS SAVED!



AFTERWARD, WHEN THE GUNG OF THE
EXPEDITION PROVED TOO MUCH FOR THE
SLIMY FOE--

YOU HAVE SAVED MY
SON'S LIFE! IN RETURN,
TAKE THIS MAGIC
AMULET-- AS LONG
AS YOU WEAR IT,
NO SNAKE
MAY HARM YOU!

THANK YOU, NARI-- I'LL
WEAR IT ALWAYS!

WELL,
THERE
THEY
GO!

WHEW!
THAT
WAS
CLOSE!

MEMSAHIB
BARNES-- A
WORD WITH
YOU, PLEASE!



IT'S NONSENSE, OF
COURSE-- BUT I CAN'T
HURT HIS FEELINGS!



THAT NIGHT-- IN HER TENT, PAT TOSSED FRET-
FULLY, GRIPPED BY A FEARFUL NIGHTMARE!



HORRIFIED, PAT WAS STARTLED INTO WAKEFULNESS--
TO FACE THE INFINITELY GREATER TERROR OF--



TREMBLING, PAT FIRED POINT-BLANK AT
THE GHASTLY APPARITION!



BUT THE LIGHT WAS POOR--HER NERVES SHATTERED--



OH.. NO! HE'S DEAD!
CRUSHED-- AS IF BY
THE COILS OF A GREAT
SNAKE-- JUST AS
NARI FORETOLD!



A FEW DAYS LATER--WINGING
ACROSS THE PACIFIC--



I'LL FINISH YOUR GREAT WORK, DAD--
I'M TAKING THE STATUE OF
MAHRANA HOME!







DAYS LATER--
A CLUE--

IT... IT'S THE WOMAN
IN THE MUSEUM!
AND THE NAME--
MAHRANA!
I THINK I'LL
PAY HER A
VISIT!

**SUMMONING UP
HER COURAGE,
PAT WENT
STRAIGHT TO
THE LAIR OF
THE SNAKE
GODDESS
HERSELF!
HER HEART
POUNDING,
SHE WATCHED
FROM A FIRE
ESCAPE--
WHILE WITHIN--
THE 20TH
CENTURY
GAVE WAY TO
DARK AGE
DEMONOLOGY!**



**AH, THERE SHE IS-- AND
THERE'S THE STATUE!**

**O SPIRIT OF THE SERPENT-
KINGDOM-- GIVE ME THE
STRENGTH TO DESTROY MY
ENEMIES
IN THIS
STRANGE
LAND!**

**I'VE HEARD
ENOUGH--
HERE
GOES!**

**WHO--?
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?**

**I WANT YOU TO
RETURN TO THE
VILE JUNGLES
WHERE YOU
BELONG, YOU
MURDEROUS
MONSTER!**

**SUDDENLY, A DEMONIC HISS-- A GHASTLY
TRANSFORMATION-- AND THEN--**



**YOU FOOL! DO YOU
KNOW THE PENALTY
FOR INTERFERING
WITH MY RITES?
DEATH!**

**K-- KEEP
AWAY
FROM ME!**

**THE REMORSELESS CREATURE POISED
TO STRIKE-- BUT AS PAT SPRANG
BACK IN HORROR, SHE STUMBLER--
AND THE FORGOTTEN MAGIC
AMULET FELL INTO VIEW...**

**YES-- AND YOU'LL BE HELP-
LESS AGAINST THE
POLICE-- WHEN I TELL
THEM WHO--WHAT YOU
REALLY ARE!**

**HA! DO YOU THINK THEY'LL BELIEVE
SUCH A RIDICULOUS STORY?
THEY'LL SAY YOU ARE MAD!**



**ARGH! THE CHARM OF THE
URDUS! I... I AM
HELPLESS AGAINST IT!**



PERHAPS THE POLICE WON'T LISTEN, BUT YOU HAVE YOUR STATUS-- WHY NOT TAKE IT AND GO BACK TO YOUR JUNGLE HOME?

IN INDIA, I WAS LOATHED AS A BEAST! HERE, I AM WORSHIPPED FOR MY BEAUTY! I AM GOING TO BE FAMOUS! NOW-- GET OUT!



LATER--

... THAT'S THE STORY, INSPECTOR! YOU... YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME!

SORRY, PAT-- I DON'T! WHAT YOU NEED IS A VACATION-- YOUR NERVES ARE SHATTERED!



THUS, IT SEEMED PAT'S BATTLE WAS LOST! MEANWHILE, A HORRENDOUS CHAIN OF EVENTS WAS UNFOLDING--

MAC-- I'M CONSIDERING MAHRANA FOR THE LEAD IN OUR PLAY, "JOAN OF ARC"-- WHAT DO YOU SAY?

AS DIRECTOR, I SAY NO! SHE HASN'T HAD ENOUGH EXPERIENCE!

BESIDES, I'VE PICKED VERA MONROE FOR THE LEAD!

SORRY, MISS MAHRANA-- THE DIRECTOR'S WORD IS FINAL! MAYBE WE'LL FIND A PART FOR YOU LATER ON!

IT'S ALL RIGHT-- NO HARD FEELINGS! GOODBYE!



THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE DIRECTOR RETURNED HOME--

MISS MAHRANA! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?

DID YOU THINK YOU COULD KEEP ME OUT OF THAT PLAY-- ME, THE SNAKE GODDESS?



THEN-- A MACABRE TRANSFORMATION-- FROM A LOVELY FACE TO-- THE MASK OF DEATH!

NO-- NO! I-- CAN'T BREATHE... ARGHHH!



THE FOOL IS DEAD-- SO IT WILL BE WITH ANYONE WHO TRIES TO STAND IN MY WAY!



AND SO BEGAN THE MOST BAFFLING CRIME WAVE OF ALL TIME -- THE VICTIMS, IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN SHOW BUSINESS -- CRUSHED TO DEATH -- AS BY A GREAT SNAKE --

HERE'S AN INTERESTING ITEM: "MAHRANA GETS COVETED LEAD IN JOAN OF ARC!" "HMM... WONDER IF THERE'S ANY CONNECTION?"

HIS SUSPICIONS AROUSED, DAN WENT TO MAHRANA'S APARTMENT! THERE...

GOOD -- THERE'S NO ONE AROUND! IF MAHRANA IS REALLY WHAT PAT CLAIMS -- IF SHE COMMITTED THOSE MURDERS -- I SHOULD FIND SOME EVIDENCE HERE!

NEW YORK... POLICE MYSTIFIED AS VERA MONROE, ACTRESS, FOUND CRUSHED!

MAHRANA GETS COVETED LEAD IN JOAN OF ARC

AFTER A PAINSTAKING SEARCH --

NOTHING -- NOT A SHRED OF EVIDENCE IN THE ROOMS -- OR ON THAT TERRACE! BUT... SOMETHING'S WRONG SOMEHOW...

SUDDENLY -- AN ASTONISHING DISCOVERY --

HOLY SMOKES! I JUST REALIZED -- THERE ARE NO BEDROOMS IN THIS APARTMENT!

MAYBE I'M NUTS -- BUT THAT IS MAHRANA'S BEDROOM! THAT TREE ON THE TERRACE -- WHERE SHE SLEEPS -- AS A SNAKE!

BUT WHEN DAN TRIED TO CONVINCE THE INSPECTOR --

LISTEN, YOU TWO -- ONE MORE WORD ABOUT SNAKE GODDESSES, AND I'LL LOCK YOU BOTH UP!

C'MON, PAT -- I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

AND IN THE HEADLINES, NEXT DAY, DAN MAHONEY SIGNED HIS OWN DEATH WARRANT!

THAT SETTLES IT! THIS DETECTIVE PROVES MEDDLESOME -- HE MUST DIE!

New York Dispatch
... DETECTIVE THWARTED IN ATTEMPT TO PROVE SNAKE THEORY!

DAN MAHONEY

THAT NIGHT, ANSWERING THE EXPECTED KNOCK ON HIS DOOR--

DETECTIVE MAHONEY! I-- I MUST SEE YOU! IT'S URGENT!

SURE, COME IN!

I THOUGHT THAT NEWS-PAPER STORY WOULD BRING HER HERE!

IT WAS A FATEFUL MEETING-- AS A MERE MORTAL, ARMED ONLY WITH WITS AND COURAGE-- FACING THE DEADLY WILES OF A MYSTICALLY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN!

I'M ATTRACTED TO YOU, DAN! WHEN I SAW YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPERS THIS MORNING, I KNEW THAT YOU WERE A MAN I COULD LOVE!

SAVE IT, SISTER! ONCE YOU GOT THOSE TENDER ARMS AROUND MY NECK-- I'D BE CRUSHED-- LIKE THE OTHERS!

AT ONCE-- AN EERIE CHANGE! THE ALTERED FEATURES THAT ONLY PAT HAD LOOKED UPON-- AND LIVED! BUT DAN HAD NO MAGIC AMULET-- ONLY HIS WITS!

SUDDENLY, LIKE ALL SNAKES, MAHRANA SEEMED HYPNOTIZED-- CHARMED BY THE MUSIC--

SHE'S COMPLETELY MESMERIZED! I'LL LOCK HER IN THE ROOM WHILE I GET THE CHIEF-- AND PROVE MY STORY!

I USED TO PLAY THIS CLARINET IN MY SCHOOL BAND-- LISTEN!

IT'S WORKING! NOW TO PUT THIS BABY TO SLEEP!

BUT WHEN DAN BROUGHT THE INSPECTOR BACK TO THE APARTMENT--

CHIEF, NOW YOU'LL SEE I WAS TELLING THE TR-- WHAT?

... ULP! SHE'S CHANGED FORM AGAIN!

HELLO, DAN!

THIS NONSENSE HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH! ARREST THAT FOOL!

HUH? ARREST DAN?

SORRY, CHIEF-- BUT I'VE GOT WORK TO DO!

WORK TO DO! BUT WHAT? HOW, AS A FUGITIVE FROM THE POLICE, COULD DAN DESTROY THE LIMITLESS EVIL OF THE SNAKE GODDESS?

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, GAMBLING ON ONE LAST DESPERATE CHANCE TO REDEEM HIMSELF, DAN RUSHED TO THE THEATER WHERE MAHRAHA WAS PLAYING JOAN OF ARC!



IS IT A DEAL THEN?

I'LL PROBABLY LOSE MY JOB, BUT-- I'LL DO IT!

THE LAST ACT! JOAN IS ABOUT TO BE BURNED AT THE STAKE--



YOU IDIOT! YOU'VE PILED THE WOOD TOO CLOSE! I'LL REALLY BURN!

THE CONSUMING FLAMES LEAPED HIGHER-- HIGHER!



AHHH! I'M BURNING! HELP!

THESE KNOTS-- THEY'RE REAL-- I.. CAN'T ESCAPE!

BOY!

WHAT REALISM!

BRAVO!

THERE WAS BUT ONE WAY OUT FOR THE DEFEATED SNAKE GODDESS-- AND-- SHE TOOK IT! BEFORE THE UNBELIEVING EYES OF A HORRIFIED AUDIENCE...

IN ORDER TO SLIDE OUT OF THOSE ROPES, YOU HAD TO TURN INTO YOUR TRUE FORM! AND THAT'S JUST WHAT I WAS WAITING FOR!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

THE ECHOING GUNFIRE HAD HARDLY DIED AWAY, WHEN...

I HEARD THOSE SHOTS IN THE WINGS, MAHONEY-- I'M ARRESTING YOU FOR THE MURDER OF MAHRAHA!

WHA--? SHE'S CHANGED BACK AGAIN-- IN DEATH! BUT, CHIEF-- TWO MINUTES AGO, SHE WAS A SNAKE!



YOU GOT ANY WITNESSES, MAHONEY?

WITNESSES? SURE-- ONLY A THOUSAND OF THEM!

WELL, I'LL BE---

SURE!

HE'S RIGHT!

I'LL TESTIFY!

LATER--

AFTER THAT, DARLING-- MY EXPLORING DAYS ARE OVER!

NOT QUITE! WE'RE GOING EXPLORING-- FOR A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE!



THE END

CAN AN A-BOMB EXPLOSION CREATE MONSTERS SUCH AS THOSE WHICH ROAMED THE EARTH MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO? SCIENTISTS SAY NO! THE HOW DID IT HAPPEN---HOW DID AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION GIVE LIFE TO A MONSTROUS CREATURE HALF HUMAN, HALF REPTILE? FOR THE ELECTRIFYING ANSWERS, READ THIS SPINE-CHILLING STORY CLOSELY---A STORY WHICH TAKES US BACK TO THE DAWN OF LIFE---TO THE ERA OF THE---

MILLION-YEAR MONSTER



The A-BOMB BLAST LEFT THE USUAL HUGE CRATER
---BUT IN IT--- WAS A THING THAT **WASN'T** USUAL!

WHAT IS IT, SIR?

BEATS ME!
LET'S CLIMB
DOWN AND
TAKE A **CLOSER**
LOOK!

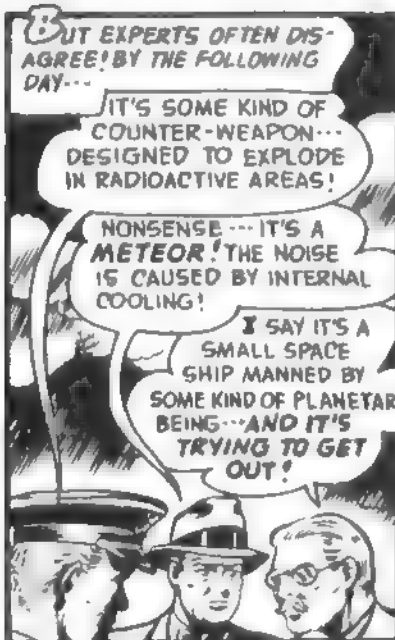
FOR A MOMENT---THEY LISTENED! IT SEEMED WILDLY
IMPOSSIBLE ---THEY HAD TO BE **SURE**---BUT THEN---

NO MISTAKE ABOUT
IT, SIR! IT'S MAKING
A NOISE---THERE'S
SOMETHING
INSIDE!

WE'D BETTER BLOCK
OFF THE ENTIRE AREA
---AND GET EXPERTS
HERE AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE!

RAK!
RRRRRAK!





BUT EXPERTS OFTEN DIS-
AGREE! BY THE FOLLOWING
DAY...

IT'S SOME KIND OF
COUNTER-WEAPON...
DESIGNED TO EXPLODE
IN RADIOACTIVE AREAS!

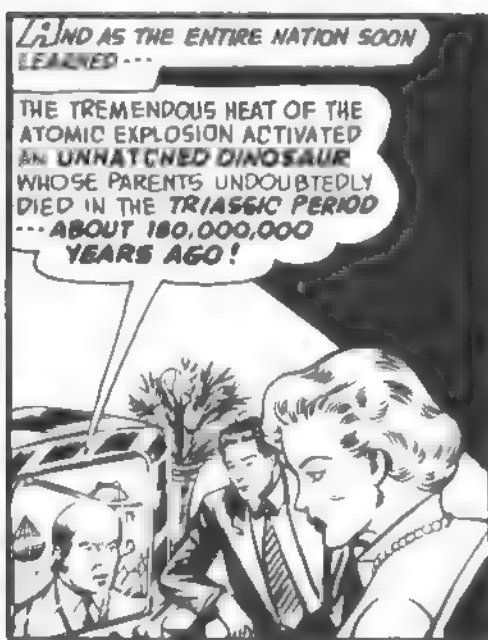
NONSENSE... IT'S A
METEOR! THE NOISE
IS CAUSED BY INTERNAL
COOLING!

I SAY IT'S A
SMALL SPACE
SHIP MANNED BY
SOME KIND OF PLANETARY
BEING... AND IT'S
TRYING TO GET
OUT!



BUT WHEN PROFESSOR
RIGBY, THE FAMOUS ZOO-
LOGIST, REACHED THE SCENE...

NOT ALL ALL,
GENTLEMEN!
THOUGH THE
BLAST FUSED A
LAYER OF EARTH
AROUND THE
SHELL. IT'S
CLEARLY--
AN EGG!



AND AS THE ENTIRE NATION SOON
LEARNED...

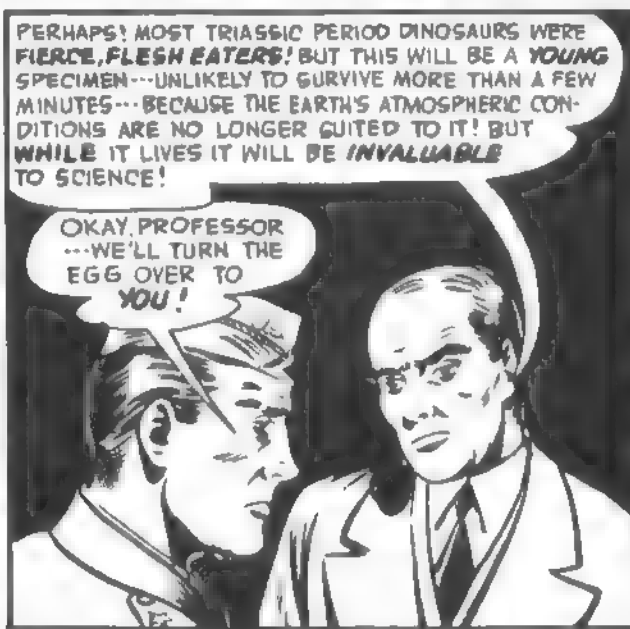
THE TREMENDOUS HEAT OF THE
ATOMIC EXPLOSION ACTIVATED
AN UNHATCHED DINOSAUR
WHOSE PARENTS UNDOUBTEDLY
DIED IN THE **TRIASSIC PERIOD**
...ABOUT 180,000,000
YEARS AGO!



UNEASILY
...A SQUAD
OF SOLDIERS
BEGAN CHIPPING
OFF THE OUTER
CRUSTS.

YOU WERE RIGHT RIGBY!
THAT THING'S ENORMOUS
...**BUT IT IS AN EGG!**

THE QUESTION NOW IS...
**WHAT ARE WE GOING
TO DO WITH IT?**
COULDN'T IT BE...
DANGEROUS?



PERHAPS! MOST TRIASSIC PERIOD DINOSAURS WERE
FIERCE, FLESH EATERS! BUT THIS WILL BE A **YOUNG**
SPECIMEN... UNLIKELY TO SURVIVE MORE THAN A FEW
MINUTES... BECAUSE THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERIC CON-
DITIONS ARE NO LONGER SUITED TO IT! BUT
WHILE IT LIVES IT WILL BE **INVALUABLE**
TO SCIENCE!

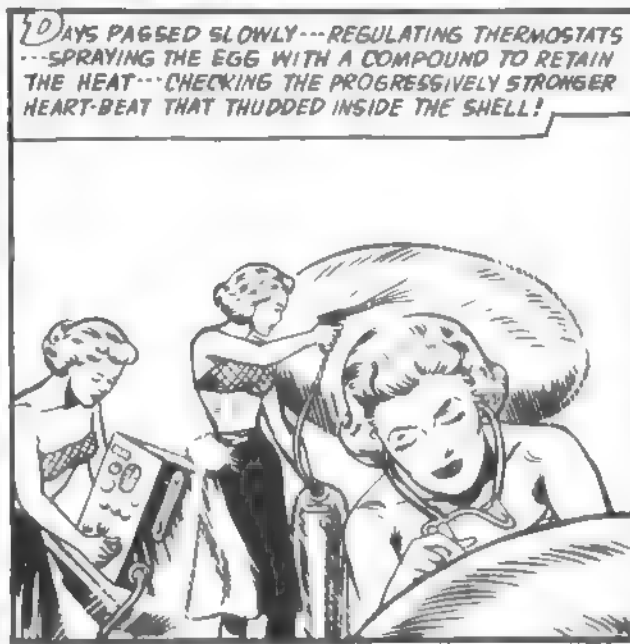
OKAY, PROFESSOR
...WE'LL TURN THE
EGG OVER TO
YOU!



AFTER HASTY PREPARATIONS-- PROFESSOR
RIGBY'S LABORATORY WAS CONVERTED INTO A
HUGE INCUBATOR!

THOSE HIGH-TEMPERATURE
TUBES ARE JUST WHAT
THE EGG NEEDS, JILL...
BUT THE HEAT'S TOO
MUCH FOR ME!

WHY NOT REST,
FATHER? NOW THAT
I'VE LEARNED WHAT'S
TO BE DONE... YOU
CAN LEAVE THE
LABORATORY
WORK TO ME!



DAYS PASSED SLOWLY... REGULATING THERMOSTATS
...SPRAYING THE EGG WITH A COMPOUND TO RETAIN
THE HEAT... CHECKING THE PROGRESSIVELY STRONGER
HEART-BEAT THAT THUDDING INSIDE THE SHELL!

BUT KELVIN JONES TOOK A VERY DIM VIEW OF THE FIND!

GOSH, JILL---YOU'VE NO LONGER GOT ANY TIME FOR ME! FOR NEARLY A MONTH---YOU'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF THAT THING NIGHT AND DAY!

HONESTLY, KELVIN---HOW CAN YOU BE JEALOUS OF A DINOSAUR? ANYWAY, FATHER'S SURE IT'S ABOUT READY TO HATCH!



WHY DIDN'T YOU X-RAY THE EGG WEEKS AGO, HONEY---JUST TO GET A PRE-VIEW OF WHAT'S COMING?

BECAUSE FATHER DOESN'T WANT THE DINOSAUR SUBJECTED TO ANY KIND OF RADIATION!



WITHIN A FEW DAYS...THE SAME QUESTION WAS ON MILLIONS OF MINDS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!

MR. CHURCHILL FEELS THERE'S NO CAUSE FOR ALARM---BUT WHAT'S THE BALLY THING GOING TO LOOK LIKE?

WITH THE NOISE INSIDE THE SHELL STEADILY INCREASING, JILL TOOK TO SLEEPING INSIDE THE LABORATORY...AND ONE NIGHT---

THAT'S STRANGE---NO RADIATION! WONDER IF PROFESSOR RIGBY HAS SOME KIND OF DOUBT ABOUT WHAT'S INSIDE THE SHELL?



WHATEVER COMES OUT OF THE EGG---WE RUSSIANS CAN HATCH SOMETHING BIGGER!

THE FRENCH CABINET HAS RESIGNED---AFTER FAILING TO AGREE ON WHETHER THE DINOSAUR WILL RESEMBLE ANY LIVING CREATURE!



THAT'S A NEW SOUND---THE EGG'S STARTING TO CRACK!



[A] MOMENT LATER---

SWITCH ON MORE LIGHTS, FATHER---I WANT TO SEE WHAT'S COMING OUT!

PATIENCE, JILL---AFTER EONS INSIDE THE SHELL, THE CREATURE NEEDS A PERIOD OF RELATIVE DARKNESS! LOOK, IT'S STARTING TO BREAK THE SHELL WITH ITS CLAWS---AND THERE'S AN EYE PEERING OUT!



MOST PECULIAR! A DINOSAUR IS A REPTILE---WHICH INVARIABLY BREAKS ITS SHELL WITH THRUSTS OF THE HEAD! THIS THING---CONTINUES TO USE ITS CLAWS!







FOR A MOMENT, JILL WAS MOTIONLESS WITH FEAR! THEN, TURNING TO FACE THE COLD REPTILIAN EYES...



"YOU TOOK CARE OF ME!" THE HYPNOTICALLY GLINTING EYES SEEM TO SAY... "YOUR HANDS KEPT ME ALIVE BEFORE I WAS HATCHED... YOUR VOICE TAUGHT ME THE ONLY WORDS I KNOW! WHO ELSE CAN SENSE MY THOUGHTS... WHO ELSE CAN GIVE ME WHAT I NEED... BUT YOU?"



JILL... JILL! ME... HUNGRY!

THIS MONSTER JUST KILLED FATHER... IT'S REPULSIVE... IT'S DEADLY! BUT SOMEHOW, I CAN'T HELP MYSELF... IT'S AS IF I'M HYPNOTIZED... AND I'VE GOT TO KEEP ON SERVING IT!

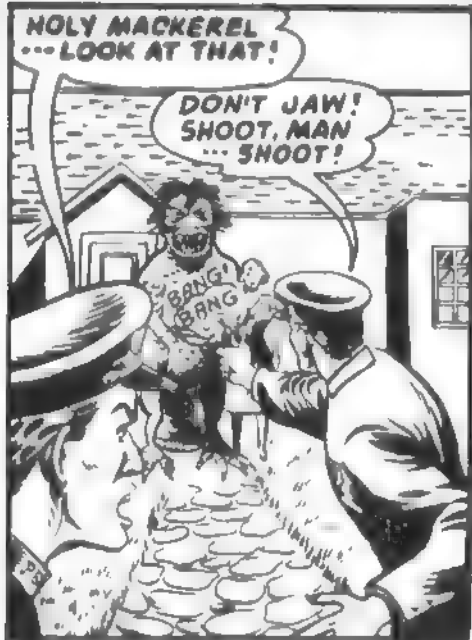


OUTSIDE...

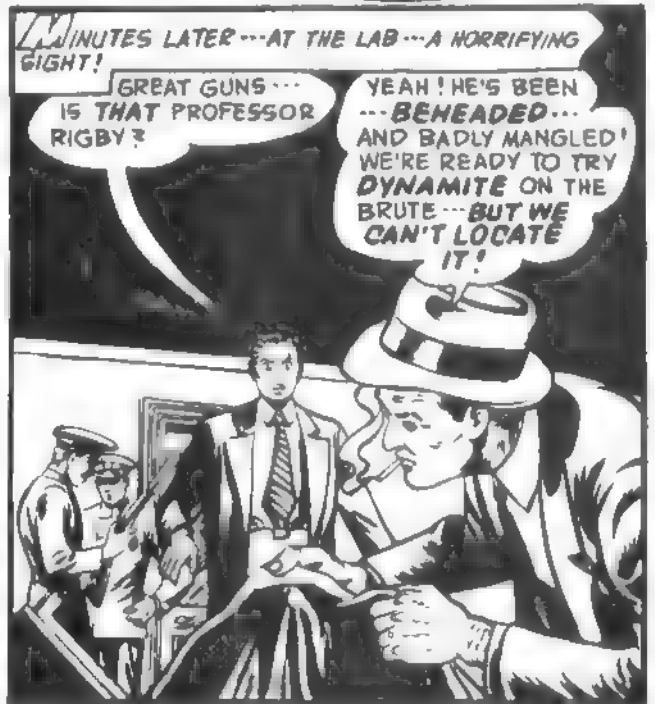
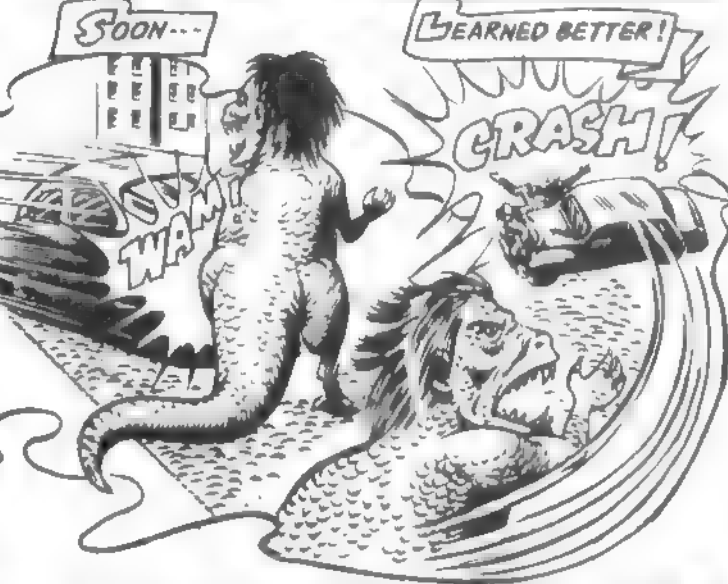
SOME PEOPLE PHONED ABOUT TERRIBLE YELLS COMING FROM PROFESSOR RIGBY'S LAB! DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT BIG EGG HATCHED, MIKE?

NOT A CHANCE! I SAY IT'S JUST A QUEER KIND OF BOULDER!





THE FEW WHO SAW THE CREATURE THAT NIGHT, AND WERE RASH ENOUGH TO THINK SOMETHING COULD BE DONE ABOUT IT...



BUT YOU'VE GOT TO --- BEFORE THE SAME THING HAPPENS TO JILL! CAN'T YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT THAT CREATURE'S UP TO?

TWO OF OUR MEN HEARD IT TALKING WHEN IT LEFT HERE WITH THE GIRL --- AND IT SAID IT WAS HUNGRY! BUT WE GOT A REPORT AN HOUR AGO THAT IT PASSED THE STOCK-YARD WITHOUT EVEN LOOKING AT THE CATTLE! THAT'S ALL WE'VE GOT TO GO ON --- CAN YOU DIG OUT ANY CLUES?

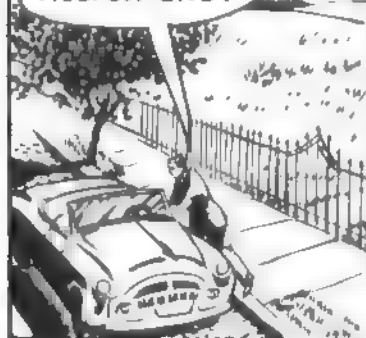


IT DOESN'T WANT HUMANS --- OR CATTLE --- AND YET ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR RIGBY, IT'S DEFINITELY A FLESH-EATER! BUT IF IT SPRANG FROM DINOSAURS MILLIONS OF YEARS OLD, IT'S LOOKING FOR THE KIND OF PREY THAT WAS AVAILABLE THEN --- OR THE CLOSEST THING TO IT! CALL AN EMERGENCY SQUAD --- AND LET'S GET TO THE ZOO!

SORRY, FELLA --- BUT WE'RE ALL TIED UP CHASING DOWN OTHER PEOPLE'S HUNCHES!



NO USE TRYING TO CONVINCE THEM --- I'LL FOLLOW UP ALONE! IF THERE'S ANY MODERN ANIMAL RELATED TO THOSE OF BYGONE AGES, IT'S A TYPE OF REPTILE KNOWN AS SAURIAN --- IN OTHER WORDS --- ALLIGATORS!



MINUTES LATER --- IN A SCENE WRITHING WITH HORROR ---

YARRRGH! ME HUNGRY --- HUNGRY!

JILL! FOR PETE'S SAKE --- GET AWAY FROM THAT DEMON!



KELVIN --- GO BACK! I CAN'T STOP TAKING CARE OF IT --- I CAN'T!

HONEY, MAYBE THE SHOCK'S BEEN TOO MUCH FOR YOU --- BUT YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO REASON!



ME --- WANT --- JILL!

UNTIL THAT MOMENT, JILL'S WILL POWER HAD BEEN STRANGELY PARALYZED --- BUT NOW ---

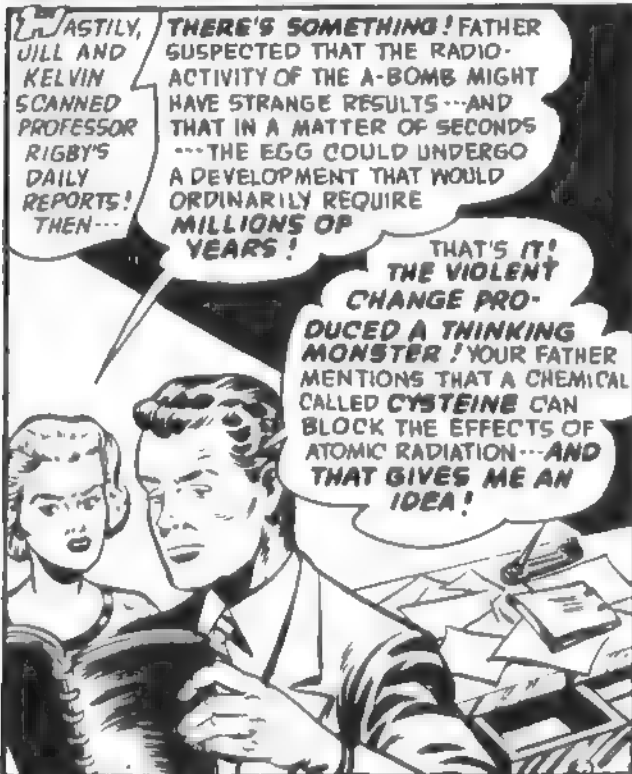
I SAW THAT HIDEOUS GLINT IN ITS EYES ONCE BEFORE --- WHEN IT KILLED FATHER! KELVIN WILL DIE THE SAME WAY --- HE'LL BE TORN APART --- UNLESS I DO SOMETHING!





FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, KELVIN...
DON'T LET GO! YOU'VE GOT
TO CLIMB OUT... FAST!

JILL...
ME WANT
JILL!



LASTLY,
JILL AND
KELVIN
SCANNED
PROFESSOR
RIGBY'S
DAILY
REPORTS!
THEN...

THERE'S SOMETHING! FATHER
SUSPECTED THAT THE RADIO-
ACTIVITY OF THE A-BOMB MIGHT
HAVE STRANGE RESULTS...AND
THAT IN A MATTER OF SECONDS
...THE EGG COULD UNDERGO
A DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD
ORDINARILY REQUIRE
MILLIONS OF
YEARS!

THAT'S IT!
THE VIOLENT
CHANGE PRO-
DUCED A THINKING
MONSTER! YOUR FATHER
MENTIONS THAT A CHEMICAL
CALLED CYSTEINE CAN
BLOCK THE EFFECTS OF
ATOMIC RADIATION...AND
THAT GIVES ME AN
IDEA!



IN A WILD OUTBURST OF FURY...

THE MONSTER'S IN A
MANIACAL RAGE...
BECAUSE I DESERTED
IT! IT'S BOUND TO
LEAVE THE PARK...
AND IT'LL
SLAUGHTER
EVERYONE
IT MEETS!

REMEMBER YOUR FATHER'S
RELUCTANCE TO USE
RADIATION ON THE
EGG? LET'S LOOK FOR
THE REASON AMONG HIS
PAPERS...BECAUSE
IT MAY INDICATE A
WAY OF DEALING
WITH THAT CREEP!



SOON AFTERWARD...

IT'S NO USE...
BULLETS MERELY
INFURIATE THAT
THING!

JILL...JILL!
WANT JILL!

GET BACK
...I'LL
HANDLE
IT!

KELVIN...DON'T
GET TOO CLOSE!

GOT TO, HONEY
...THIS TREAT-
MENT CALLS FOR
A HYPODERMIC!

YARRRGH!



Then...STRICKEN BY A TRANSFORMATION THAT HITS
LIKE A LIGHTNING BOLT...

HOLY SMOKE...
IT'S CHANGED
INTO A
DINOSAUR!

YEP...A DEAD
DINOSAUR! FIFTY THOUS-
AND UNITS OF CYSTEINE
CONCENTRATE REVERSED
THE EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOP-
MENT THAT CREATURE UNDER-
WENT IN THE EGG...AND
QUICKLY ENOUGH TO
KILL IT!



AGAIN, THE NEWS FLASHED AROUND THE WORLD...
AND THIS TIME...

MONSTER OR NO MONSTER
...THE BRITISH HUMANE
SOCIETY WISHES TO
PROTEST AGAINST THE
CRUELTY INFLICTED ON
THE ALLIGATORS!

THE NEW FRENCH
CABINET HAS RE-
SIGNED...AFTER
DEBATING WHETHER
THE MONSTER WAS
A HUMAN REPTILE
...OR A REPTILIAN
HUMAN!

IN RUSSIA...WE
KNOW HOW TO
TREAT MONSTERS!

ARTIST of EVIL







THE PORTRAIT HAUNTED JIM'S DREAMS! AND HE AWOKE TO HORROR -- FOR A NIGHTMARE HAD BECOME GRUESOME REALITY!



FIGHTING WITH FIERCE DESPERATION, JAMES MANAGED TO THRUST HIS FOE BACK FOR THE MOMENT --



JIM'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND FOUND A LAMP! BUT WITH THE LIGHT, HIS AWFUL ADVERSARY HAD DISAPPEARED!



MORNING FOUND JIM CONVINCED IT HAD BEEN A NIGHTMARE -- FOR THE THING HE HAD BATTLED WAS THE CREATURE OF THE PORTRAIT! THEN -- AN AMAZING DISCOVERY!



THIS BUTTON I FOUND ON THE FLOOR BELOW THE PICTURE -- IT'S IDENTICAL WITH THOSE ON HIS CAPE! AND THERE'S ONE MISSING -- AS IF IT WERE TORN OFF IN A STRUGGLE!

THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT INVESTIGATE THAT MYSTERIOUS ARTIST -- NATAS! ACCOMPANIED BY PEGGY--



I AM HONORED! THE FAMOUS ART CRITIC, JAMES OTIS, AND THE PROMISING ART STUDENT, PEGGY BOWDEN! COME IN!

IT--IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE'D BEEN EXPECTING US!



NOW, MR. OTIS, AND MISS BOWDEN, LET ME GIVE YOU AN ILLUSTRATION OF HOW A GREAT GENIUS WORKS!

THIS GUY SEEMS COMPLETELY MAD! PEGGY, WE OUGHT TO GET OUT OF HERE!



A FEW STROKES OF HIS BRUSH -- AND A COMPLETE PAINTING IS DONE!

LOOK -- AM I NOT THE GREATEST PAINTER IN THE WORLD?

I--I MUST BE DREAMING-- I COULD SWEAR THAT'S AN AUTHENTIC REMBRANDT! WHAT--WHAT -- SORT OF MAN IS THIS?

I KNOW WHAT KIND-- I'VE GOT IT NOW! NATAS-- HIS NAME, BACK-WARDS, IS SATAN!



AS THE HORRIBLE TRUTH DAWNS---

GREAT SCOTT! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

SHE'S STAYING, MR. OTIS--UNTIL YOU DECIDE TO CHANGE YOUR REVIEW, AND TELL THE PUBLIC I AM THE GREATEST PAINTER IN THE WORLD!



NO! AND I'LL NOT LEAVE HERE WITHOUT HER!

JIM -- CAN'T YOU SEE THAT YOU'VE GOT TO-- THAT WE'RE BOTH IN DEADLY DANGER?

POWERLESS, JIM LEFT! IT SEEMED AN EASY MATTER TO WRITE THE WORDS THAT WOULD FREE PEGGY, BUT--

I--I CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH IT! I KEEP THINKING OF THE PEOPLE WHO'LL READ MY REVIEW, AND BE FACED WITH THE LIVING EVIL THE PAINTINGS REPRESENT!



BUT -- BUT MAYBE I'M MAKING TOO MUCH OUT OF THIS -- MAYBE THE PAINTINGS AREN'T AS BAD AS I THOUGHT! PERHAPS IF I RETURNED TO THE EXHIBIT, LOOKED AT THEM AGAIN --



SO--BACK AT THE EXHIBIT---

FUNNY -- IT'S AFTER HOURS, BUT THE DOOR WAS STILL OPEN! AND WHERE'S OLD ANDY, THE WATCHMAN?



THEN -- A TRAGIC DISCOVERY!

NOT A MARK ON HIM -- NOTHING BUT THAT EXPRESSION OF AWFUL FEAR! NOTHING HUMAN KILLED HIM -- BUT THOSE PICTURES DID!



AROUND HIM THERE SWIRLED A LIVING EVIL -- AN EVIL WHICH HAD PREYED ON THE LIVING--

YOU'VE MADE UP MY MIND FOR ME! I WON'T COMPROMISE WITH YOU -- BUT I'LL DESTROY YOU!



MAD WITH RAGE, JIM ATTACKED THE SINISTER PAINTINGS! AND FROM THEM, STRANGE BEINGS STREAMED--AND STRUCK BACK!



IT WAS A STRANGE BATTLE -- AN UNEQUAL BATTLE --



--AND FINALLY, JIM WENT DOWN -- KNOCKING OVER THE WATCHMAN'S LANTERN!

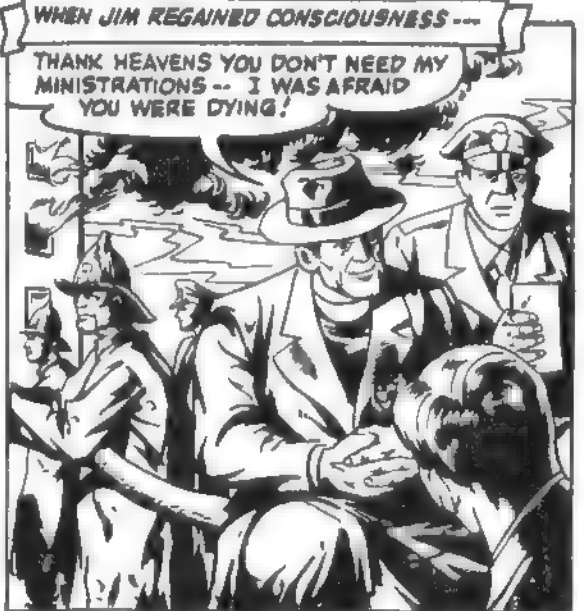


NO! NO! NOT THE FIRE AGAIN!



WHEN JIM REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS --

THANK HEAVENS YOU DON'T NEED MY MINISTRATIONS -- I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE DYING!



THANKS, PADRE -- BUT MAYBE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF I HAD DIED! WHAT HAVE I GOT LEFT TO LIVE FOR NOW?



THE MENACE OF THE PAINTINGS HAD BEEN DESTROYED -- BUT WITHIN JIM LINGERED THE MEMORY OF PEGGY -- POWERLESS WITHIN SATAN'S GRASP!

SON, WE MUST NEVER GIVE UP HOPE! HERE, TAKE THIS -- WHO KNOWS IN WHAT WAY IT MAY HELP YOU?





JIM WAS PREPARED FOR ANYTHING -- BUT NOT FOR THE SIGHT THAT GREETED HIM!



AFRAID TO FACE THE TRUTH, AREN'T YOU-- SATAN? I'VE GOT A WORLD REPUTATION AS AN HONEST ART CRITIC-- AND I SAY YOUR PAINTINGS ARE BASE AND VILE! THAT'S BECAUSE YOU CAN ONLY SEE AND REVEAL EVIL-- BY YOUR VERY NATURE, YOU'RE BLINDED TO TRUTH! AND EVERY GREAT ARTIST HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE GOOD IN MAN!



THE PRINCE OF EVIL REACTS -- IN AWFUL RAGE!

HO, FIENDS! TO ME-- AND DOWN THIS MORTAL! KILL HIM!



AGAINST FEARFUL ODDS--

LOOKS LIKE THE END OF THE LINE FOR ME ----



--- BUT I CAN STILL GO DOWN FIGHTING!



IT WAS AT THIS LIFE-OR-DEATH MOMENT THAT A BOOK FELL FROM JIM'S POCKET-- AND THE DEMONS RECOILED BEFORE IT!

IT-- IT'S THAT BIBLE THE PADRE GAVE ME! AND IF IT'S ROUTED THE FIENDS-- I'LL TRY IT ON THE HEAD-MAN HIMSELF!



BEFORE THE POWER OF THE HOLY WORD, "NATAS" CRUMPLES! FROM HIS BODY THE AWFUL FORM OF SATAN TOWERS MOMENTARILY-- THEN VANISHES!



LATER --- I--I FEEL AS IF I'VE BEEN ASLEEP, AND DREAMING SOME AWFUL DREAM! IF I COULD ONLY REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS, JIM --

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR US TO REMEMBER, PEGGY! WE'VE GOT EACH OTHER-- AND THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS!



The END

MURDER IS A THING FOR DARK ALLEYS, YOU'D THINK! AND DRIPPING BLOOD, THE MOANS OF DYING VICTIMS... WHERE ELSE BUT IN THE DARK, SECRET HAUNTS OF THE UNDERWORLD? THE POLICE THOUGHT SO TOO... UNTIL THEY LEARNED THE AWFUL HORROR OF...

FLOWERING DEATH!



NEXT DAY...AT HEADQUARTERS...

NOW IT'S HENRY ASTOR WHO'S TURNED UP MISSING... LAST SEEN NOT FAR FROM THE HILTON ESTATE! IF OLD HILTON WEREN'T SUCH A KINDLY OLD DUFFER...

RELAX, BROPHY! ED HILTON WOULDN'T HURT A FLY! HIS ONLY INTEREST IS IN FLOWERS!

THERE WAS NO WAY OF THEM KNOWING WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT THIS VERY MOMENT...

DAYS LENGTHENED INTO WEEKS... AND AS THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES CONTINUED...



SO SORRY, MRS. GOLD-- BUT I HAD TO DO THIS!

A-EEE!

SO WHAT IF SEVERAL OF THEM WERE SEEN NEAR THE HILTON PLACE? QUIT HARPING ON THAT... HE'S A WEALTHY, PROMINENT CITIZEN WITH ONLY ONE HARMLESS ECCENTRICITY... HIS MANIA FOR COLLECTING FLOWERS.

BUT WE'VE GOT TO COME UP WITH SOME SUSPECTS, COMMISSIONER! GOLLY, IT STARTED WITH ALBERT ROSE... AND THERE'S BEEN MRS. GOLD AND HENRY ASTOR AND THAT SMITH GIRL AND... WAIT!



ALBERT ROSE... ROSE! HENRY ASTOR... ASTER! MRS. MARY GOLD... MARIGOLD! AND THE SMITH DAME... DABBY SMITH! DON'T YOU GET IT? FLOWER NAMES, EVERYONE OF THEM... AND THAT OLD SO-AND-SO COLLECTS FLOWERS! CALL OUT A SQUAD-CAR... AND LET'S GET SOME!

FRANTICALLY, THEY SPED TOWARDS THEIR DATE WITH DEATH...ARRIVING JUST IN TIME TO SEE...

YES, POLICE .45'S ARE EFFECTIVE... EVEN IF THEIR EFFECTS AREN'T PRETTY TO WITNESS...



IRIS... SUCH A PRETTY NAME... SUCH A LOVELY FLOWER TO ADD TO MY OTHER BEAUTIES...

HOLY SMOKE! LET HIM HAVE IT, MEN!

ARGGH!



BAM!

UH--!

BAM!

BAM!

THEY DIDN'T HAVE FAR TO SEARCH! WITHIN A HEAVILY-LOCKED HOTHOUSE...CLOSED OFF FROM PRYING EYES BY HEAVY SHADES...



NOT EXACTLY LIFELIKE, IS IT, COMMISSIONER? I--I GUESS MAYBE I'D CALL IT FLOWERING DEATH!

GENUS ROSE

GENUS ASTER

GENUS MARIGOLD

GENUS DAISY

THE END



STEP INTO MY PARLOR, ALL YOU GOOD FRIENDS AND PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS--MY FUNERAL PARLOR! AH, THE OLD UNDERTAKER'S GOT A RARE STORY FOR YOU TONIGHT--**RIGHT OUT OF THE CORPSE'S MOUTH!** SO PULL OVER A TOMBSTONE AND SIT DOWN! AND WHILE THE MARROW FREEZES IN YOUR BONES AND A SCREAM BUBBLES TO YOUR ASHEN LIPS, LISTEN TO THE EERIE FACTS AS THEY ACTUALLY HAPPENED-- IN THE WORDS OF THE CADAVER HIMSELF! START TALKING, PROFESSOR CHAUNCEY JOAD--AND TELL THESE **LOVELY** PEOPLE ALL ABOUT THE SCREAMING HORROR WE'LL CALL--

WITHIN THE TOMB

NOW THAT NOTHING CAN BE CHANGED, NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING AT LAST, MY MIND KEEPS RELIVING IT ALL! I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ONCE I WAS THE RESPECTED CHAUNCEY JOAD, PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY IN A SMALL MIDWESTERN MEDICAL COLLEGE! LIFE WAS SANE AND ORDERED THEN, TERM FOLLOWED TERM, AND I HAD LONG SINCE SETTLED INTO A COMFORTABLE, ORGANIZED ROUTINE...



THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE SEEING A **DEAD BODY** FOR THE FIRST TIME MUST LEARN TO THINK OF IT ONLY AS A **CADAVER!** FORGET THAT IT WAS ONCE A LIVING, BREATHING MAN--FOR YOU, NOW, IT IS MERELY SOMETHING TO BE DISSECTED, LIKE A **FROG--OR A DOG--**

EACH TERM PRESENTED THE SAME PROBLEMS... SQUEAMISH STUDENTS WHO TURNED PALE OR FAINTED WHEN MY SCALPEL FIRST SUCED INTO HUMAN FLESH, REVEALING DARK RED MUSCLES AND TWISTED TENDONS...



I-I THINK I'M GOING TO...
ONNNNN...

HOW FAMILIAR THAT LIFE WAS... HOW VERY PLEASANT! I HAD MY WORK--AND MY BELOVED DAUGHTER, HESTER--A SWEET, DOCILE GIRL I CHERISHED ABOVE EVERYTHING--



I DON'T MEAN TO COMPLAIN, FATHER--BUT--

--WELL, THIS
EXISTENCE --
IT'S SO DULL!
AND I'M
LONELY--

NOW, NOW, HESTER --
IF I HAD THE MONEY,
I'D TAKE YOU WHERE
YOU COULD MEET
MEN WORTHY OF
YOU -- BUT --

BUT YOU DON'T
HAVE THE
MONEY! YOUR
INCOME BARELY
MEETS EX-
PENSES! WHAT
AM I TO DO,
FATHER? I
DON'T WANT
TO BE AN
OLD MAID!

PLENTY OF
TIME LEFT
BEFORE
WORRYING
ABOUT THAT,
DAUGHTER!
LEAVE IT TO
ME -- I'LL
THINK OF
SOMETHING!

I SOMETIMES DAYDREAMED THAT
MY RESEARCH WOULD MAKE ME
THE FORTUNE TEACHING NEVER
COULD! I WAS THANKFUL THE
SCHOOL HAD PROVIDED ME WITH
SO BRILLIANT AND DEVOTED AN
ASSISTANT AS JUAN AGUILA...

SHALL I
CRYSTALLIZE
THE SOLUTION
AT 441 DEGREES,
PROFESSOR?

WHATEVER YOU
THINK BEST,
JUAN -- I
TRUST YOUR
JUDGMENT
COMPLETELY!

FOR YEARS ON END, THE PATTERN OF MY LIFE NEVER VARIED --
EXCEPT FOR THE OCCASIONAL CRISES ALL FATHERS HAVE ...

HESTER AND JUAN -- THEY'RE GETTING TOO
FRIENDLY! WHAT KIND OF LIFE CAN SOME-
ONE LIKE HIM OFFER HER? I'D
BETTER BREAK IT OFF --

I EXPECT YOU TO BE
CIVIL WITH JUAN,
BUT NO MORE! I'VE
GOT HOPES AND
DREAMS FOR YOU, CHILD --
AMBITIONS FOR YOUR
FUTURE, AND HE
CAN'T PLAY A PART
IN IT.

BUT JUAN'S
CHARMING,
FATHER!
AND THERE'S
NOBODY
ELSE!

THAT'S ENOUGH,
HESTER! YOU'LL
STOP SEEING
HIM SOCIALLY --
DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?

I --
UNDERSTAND --

MONEY...
THE ROOT
OF ALL
EVIL! WITH
MONEY I
COULD PUT
HESTER IN
CONTACT WITH
ACCEPTABLE
MEN! FORTU-
NATELY, THE
LAB
EXPERIMENTS
TOOK A
FASCINATING
TURN, RELIEVING
MY MIND
TEMPORARILY
OF THE
VEXING
PROBLEM --

EXTRAORDINARY,
PROFESSOR!

YES! EXTREME
CATALEPSIS!

NO PULSE, BREATH, RESPIRATION, OR CAPILLARY DILATION! TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES--THIS CREATURE IS DEAD!

BUT WE KNOW IT'S ALIVE, PROFESSOR! WHEN YOUR FORMULA WEARS OFF, THE DOG WILL BE GOOD AS NEW!



SYSTEMATICALLY, WE TESTED THE POWERFUL ANESTHETIC UNDER VARYING CONDITIONS.

IT APPEARS THAT 72 HOURS IS THE LIMIT OF THE DRUG'S EFFECT! ANY LARGER DOSE IS FATAL!

YES, BUT FOR THOSE 72 HOURS, THE ANESTHETIZED SUBJECT SHOWS NO SIGNS OF LIFE! CLINICALLY SPEAKING, IT IS DEAD!



IT WAS SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER THAT MY BRILLIANT IDEA FIRST FLASHED IN UPON MY INTELLECT...

OF COURSE! NO DOCTOR IN THE WORLD WOULD SUSPECT THE TRUTH! I'LL BE \$100,000 RICHER AND IN A POSITION TO FIND HESTER A MAN WORTHY OF HER!



I TURNED THE MATTER OVER IN MY MIND FOR A LONG WHILE BEFORE PROCEEDING TO ACT...

A \$100,000 LIFE INSURANCE POLICY? BUT--ER--AT YOUR AGE, THE PREMIUMS WILL BE EXTREMELY HIGH!

LET ME WORRY ABOUT THAT!



IT TOOK ALMOST MY LIFE'S SAVINGS, TO PAY THE FIRST PREMIUM ON THE POLICY--BUT WHAT DID THAT MATTER? NOW THE TIME HAD COME TO TELL HESTER...

NO, FATHER-- I WON'T PERMIT IT! IT'S INSANE!

NONSENSE! THE PLAN'S FOOLPROOF! I'LL BE PRONOUNCED DEAD, YOU'LL SEE TO IT THAT I'M QUICKLY BURIED, AND AFTER I'M DUG UP WE'LL DISAPPEAR--AND BE \$100,000 RICHER!



IT'S TOO DANGEROUS! I KNOW YOU'RE THINKING OF ME, BUT--

WITH THIS MONEY, YOU CAN HAVE EVERYTHING! THERE'S NO POINT IN FURTHER ARGUMENT--I'VE MADE UP MY MIND!



NEXT I HAD TO TELL JUAN... BECAUSE HE'D HAVE TO ADMINISTER THE DRUG AND SEE TO IT THAT THE COFFIN WAS DUG UP IN TIME! I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON MY SLAVISHLY DEVOTED ASSISTANT--

I-I WON'T DO IT, SIR! JUST SUPPOSE SOMETHING WENT WRONG! I WON'T JEOPARDIZE YOUR LIFE!

NOTHING CAN GO WRONG, JUAN! HAVEN'T I ALWAYS SAID I TRUSTED YOU COMPLETELY?



THE THREE OF US REHEARSED THE PLAN FOR WEEKS... THEN...

PLEASE, FATHER, PLEASE DON'T DO IT!

SHE'S RIGHT, SIR, IT'S NOT WORTH RISKING!

LET ME BE BEST JUDGE OF THAT--AND DON'T FORGET YOUR INSTRUCTIONS! NOW--PROCEED!



IT WOULD LOOK LIKE A SUDDEN HEART ATTACK-- QUITE COMMON! RELUCTANTLY, JUAN JABBED THE NEEDLE INTO MY ELBOW! IT WAS A FEW MOMENTS BEFORE MY BLOODSTREAM CARRIED THE DRUG TO MY BRAIN...

DON'T FORGET! BEFORE 72 HOURS! I... I... AHHHHH...

OF COURSE, PROFESSOR-- JUST RELAX--



IT WAS STRANGE... SO VERY STRANGE... FEELING MYSELF GO RIGID... LOSING CONTACT WITH MY NUMB LIMBS! I FELT MY BREATH THICKEN AND CEASE... AND THEN MY HEART STOPPED ABRUPTLY! I COULD STILL SEE AND THINK, HOWEVER, AS WE'D KNOWN WOULD BE THE CASE... BECAUSE THERE WAS NO IMPAIRMENT OF THE BRAIN...

I-I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE! YOU CALL THE DOCTOR AS SOON AS I'M GONE!

OH, JUAN, I'M SO SCARED! I HOPE EVERYTHING TURNS OUT ALL RIGHT-- IT'S GOT TO!



IT WAS A CURIOUS SENSATION LYING THERE... SEEING ONLY WHAT WAS IN MY LINE OF VISION... THINKING CLEARLY... BUT UNABLE TO TWITCH A HAIR! WHEN THE FRANTICALLY SUMMONED DOCTOR CAME...

THERE'S... NO PULSE AT ALL! HE... HE'S...

OH, NO! NOT FATHER-- SOB!--



HESTER WAS MARVELOUS! I WAS QUITE PROUD OF HER! TOO BAD I COULDN'T APPLAUD...

BUT HE WAS IN PERFECT HEALTH! GOOD LORD, HESTER, I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SIGN YOUR FATHER'S DEATH CERTIFICATE...

OH, FATHER-- WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE YOU?



SO FAR SO GOOD! BUT WHO COULD EVER HAVE ANTICIPATED THOSE FATEFUL WORDS OF THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT--

I'LL GIVE IMMEDIATE ORDERS TO PREPARE THE UNIVERSITY CHAPEL SO THAT HIS BODY CAN LIE IN STATE!



N-NO! PLEASE, I'D RATHER HAVE NO FUSS! I WAS HOPING TO... TO BURY MY FATHER IMMEDIATELY!

BUT MY DEAR GIRL-- IT'S A CUSTOM HERE THAT DECEASED FACULTY MEMBERS BE HONORED! IT'S SIMPLY UNHEARD OF TO RUSH ANYBODY INTO THE GROUND WITHOUT THE SCHOOL PAYING THESE LAST RESPECTS!



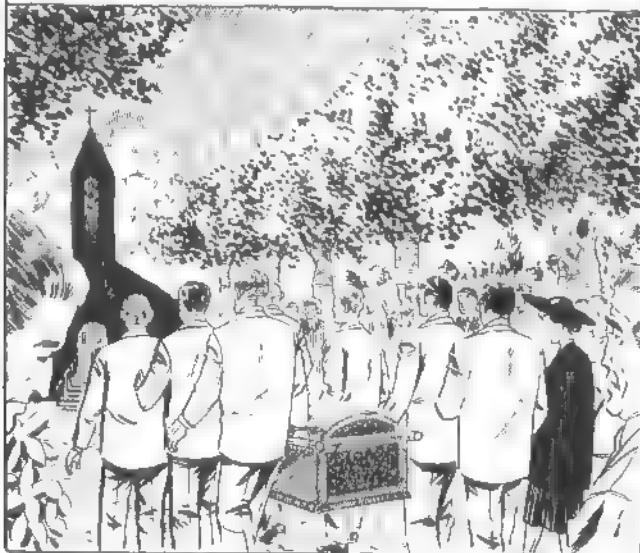
CURSE THOSE BLASTED FOOLS! BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO ENJOY CHORTLING OVER THEIR GOOD FORTUNE IN OUTLIVING ME, THEY'D CREATED A SERIOUS PROBLEM...

WHAT'LL WE DO, JUAN? THEY'RE GOING TO HOLD UP BURIAL! THE DRUG MIGHT WEAR OFF!

I-I'LL HAVE TO GIVE THE PROFESSOR ANOTHER SHOT WHEN THIS ONE'S DUE TO WEAR OFF! WE'VE --ER-- NEVER TESTED THE EFFECT OF TWO CONSECUTIVE DOSES... BUT I HOPE IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT...



THE NEXT MORNING, MY RIGID BODY WAS REMOVED TO THE UNIVERSITY CHAPEL! I HEARD EVERY FOOTSTEP -- FELT EVERY JAR OF THE COFFIN --



IN THE CHAPEL, THE STUDENT BODY BEGAN FILING PAST! THROUGH THE STILL VEIL OF MY LASHES, I COULD SEE THEM WHEN THEY MOVED INTO MY LINE OF VISION... HYPOCRITICAL FACES... PEERING DOWN WITH MORBID CURIOSITY AT MY RIGID FEATURES...



THE HOURS PASSED... SLOWLY! I'D BECOME BORED WITH THE ENDLESS STREAM OF GROTESQUELY STARING FACES... AND I'D BEGUN WONDERING ABOUT MARGINS FOR ERROR! AFTER ALL, WE'D NEVER TRIED THE SERUM ON A HUMAN... HOW COULD WE BE SURE OF ITS EXACT STRENGTH?



SUPPOSE I CAME OUT OF IT TOO QUICKLY? A MAN IN FINE HEALTH LIKE ME... HOW LONG COULD I REMAIN RIGID IF I HAD TO? WITH MEDICAL STUDENTS FILING PAST, HOW LONG COULD I APPEAR NOT TO BREATHE... NOT TO TWITCH... NOT EVEN TO FLICKER AN EYELASH...?



THAT NIGHT, JUAN REPEATED THE DOSAGE. FOR AN INSTANT, I FELT A SURGE OF FANTASTIC TERROR! HOW DID I KNOW FOR SURE THAT A SECOND DOSE WOULDN'T KILL ME? THE TRUTH WAS... I DIDN'T!

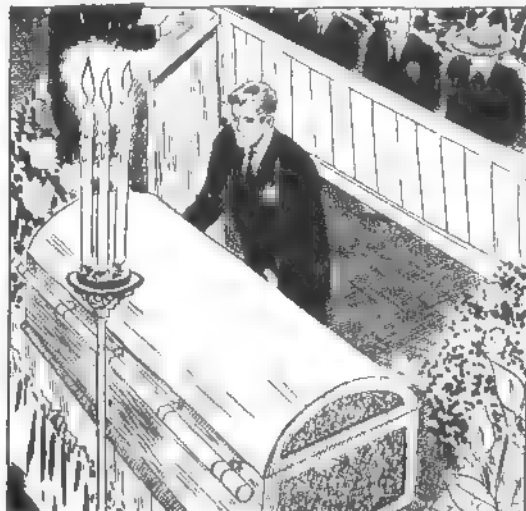


BUT I FELT NO DIFFERENCE IN RESPONSE TO THE SECOND DOSE! EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME -- NO BODILY SENSATIONS... ONLY MY MIND FUNCTIONING, THANK HEAVENS, AS BEFORE! AT LAST THE RITUALS WERE NEARLY OVER...

WE ARE GATHERED HERE TO HONOR A MEMORABLE MAN...



THERE WAS A CERTAIN GROTESQUE HUMOR IN LISTENING TO MY OWN OBITUARY! IT WASN'T TILL THEY CLAMPED THE LID OF THE COFFIN SHUT THAT I FELT THAT FIRST SHUDDER OF GRUESOME HORROR... THE FIRST AWFUL AWARENESS OF THE MEANING OF DEATH!



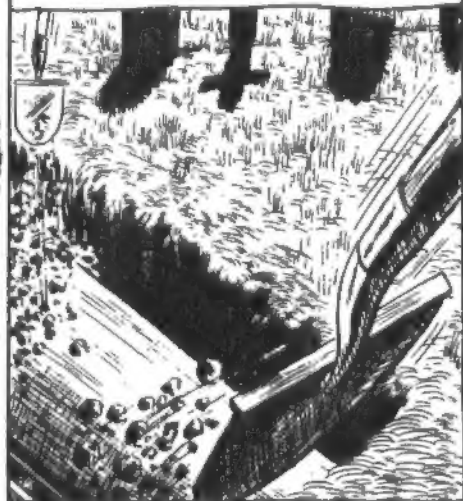
BY THE TIME WE REACHED THE CEMETERY, I'D BEGUN TO HAVE MISGIVINGS! I'D BEGUN TO FEEL THE FIRST NEEDLE-POINTS OF FEAR... FEAR THAT SOMETHING MIGHT GO WRONG... FEAR THAT I MIGHT NOT COME OUT OF THAT AWFUL HOLE...



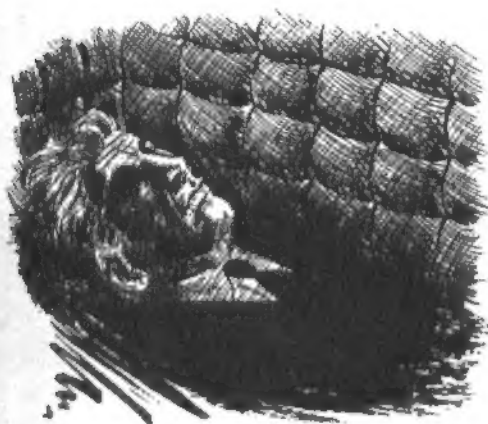
THE MINISTER'S VOICE AT LAST WAS SILENT... THE SERVICES WERE OVER! I FELT THE WORKMEN LOWERING THE COFFIN INTO THE GRAVE... CAREFULLY... AS IF NOT WISHING TO DISTURB THE CORPSE'S FINAL REST!



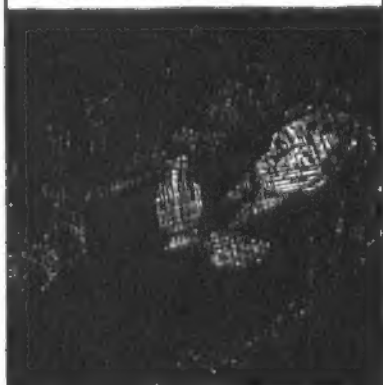
THE AWFUL THUD OF EARTH AND GRAVEL FALLING ON A COFFIN... HEARD FROM INSIDE! I HADN'T PICTURED ALL THIS TO MYSELF IN ADVANCE... OR I MIGHT NEVER HAVE HAD THE COURAGE TO GO THROUGH WITH IT...



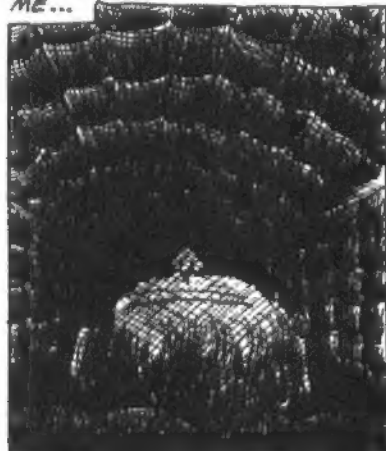
THE CLATTER OF FALLING STONES AND DIRT GREW FAINTER... THEN CEASED ALTOGETHER! FOR A TIME, MY EARS STRAINED AFTER THE FAINTEST SOUND... NOTHING! I WAS UTTERLY ALONE... IN COMPLETE BLACKNESS AND SILENCE... A LIVING BRAIN IN A COFFIN...



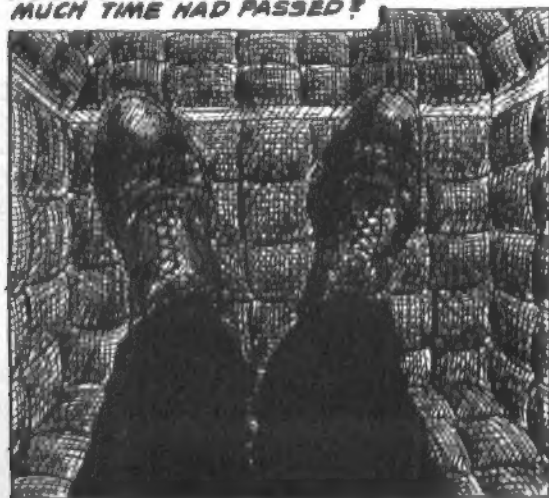
UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE TO TURN BACK, I HADN'T REALIZED WHAT FANTASTIC HORROR WOULD FACE ME THERE IN THE GRAVE! KEEPING TRACK OF THE TIME BY THE WALL CLOCK IN THE CHAPEL, I'D ESTIMATED THAT THE SERUM WOULD LAST SOME 51 HOURS AFTER MY BURIAL! BUT NOW, IN THE COFFIN, I HAD NO CONCEPT WHAT-EVER OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME...



HOW MUCH TIME HAD ALREADY PASSED?... TEN SECONDS?... ONE MINUTE?... AN HOUR?... HOW COULD I BE SURE? THERE IN THE DARK EARTH, AN HOUR MIGHT SEEM LIKE A DAY... OR A YEAR... OR AN ETERNITY! A CLAMMY DREAD BEGAN TO CREEP OVER ME...



I TRIED PASSING TIME BY THINKING OVER MY PAST LIFE... MY CHILDHOOD... EDUCATION... MY WORK! I THOUGHT ABOUT THE \$100,000 HESTER WOULD COLLECT FROM THE INSURANCE COMPANY... THE NEW LIFE WE'D MAKE FOR OURSELVES ELSEWHERE--A RICH LIFE! SOON THEY'D DIG ME UP AND... BUT WHEN WAS SOON? NOW MUCH TIME HAD PASSED?

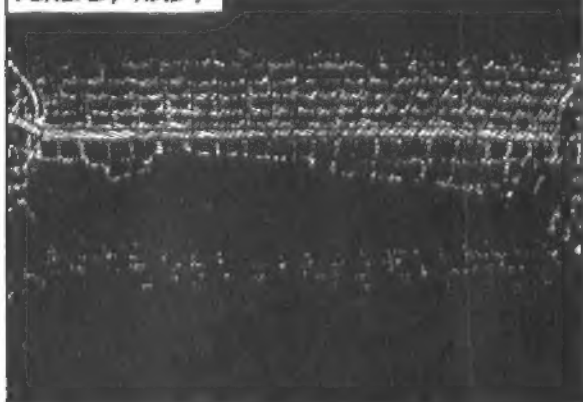


IT WAS THEN I FIRST FELT PANIC! WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SOMETHING WENT WRONG... SUPPOSE THEY COULDN'T DIG ME UP? WHEN THE DRUG WORE OFF, MY LIMBS WOULD STIR, MY EMPTY LUNGS WOULD GASP FOR AIR! ALL I'D HAVE WAS THE FETID ATMOSPHERE WITHIN A COFFIN UNDER SIX FEET OF EARTH! I'D BE BURIED ALIVE... I SAW IT IN MY MIND'S EYE...



OH, LORD...
GASP...
HELP!...
AAGH!

I TRIED TO CALM MYSELF, WONDERED WHETHER NIGHT HAD COME! WOULD HESTER AND JUAN EXHUME ME **THAT** NIGHT, OR WAIT TILL **TOMORROW**? OR WAS IT **ALREADY** TOMORROW? THE COLD FEAR RETURNED! MAYBE THE DRUG'S POWER WAS ALREADY WEARING OFF... MAYBE THE 51 HOURS WERE NEARLY OVER... IT WAS POSSIBLE... **ANYTHING** WAS POSSIBLE... NOW I SAW WHAT A FOOL I'D BEEN TO GET INTO THIS SITUATION! TOO MANY THINGS COULD GO WRONG... **MAYBE SOMETHING ALREADY HAD!**



WHEN THAT LONG SPASM OF TERROR PASSED, I FELL INTO A HAZY TORPOR! I RELIVED MY LIFE AGAIN...COUNTED SLOWLY TO A THOUSAND... THEN BACK TO ONE... ALL TRACK OF TIME LOST! I KNEW ONLY THE UNSPEAKABLE ANGUISH OF EVERY PASSING INSTANT IN THE DARKNESS OF THE TOMB, THE COLD DAMPNESS OF IT, THE UNBEARABLE FEAR OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE DRUG WORE OFF... SCREAMING MY LUNGS OUT WITH NO ONE TO HEAR! **MERCIFUL HEAVENS... WHY DID I EVER GET INTO THIS?**



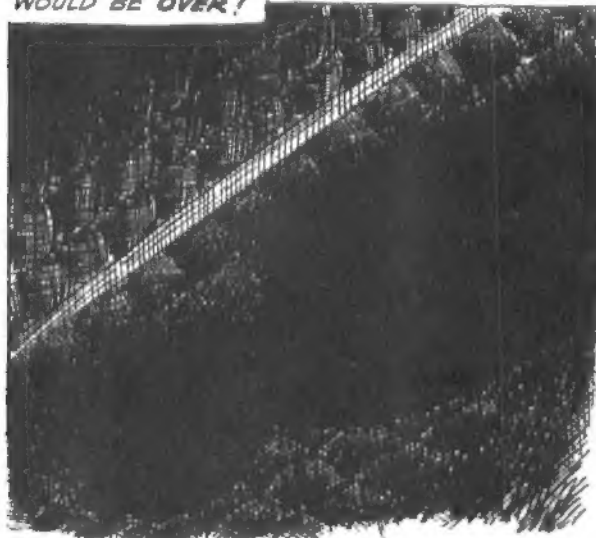
MORE TIME PASSED...AND MORE! WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED? MAYBE THE CEMETERY WAS CLOSELY GUARDED! MAYBE HESTER AND JUAN **COULDN'T** GET IN! TIME FLOWED ON... ON... AND ON... SUDDENLY I REALIZED THAT **PERHAPS ONLY A SINGLE HOUR HAD PASSED!** PERHAPS I'D HAVE TO RELIVE THIS AGONY **TEN TIMES** OVER BEFORE THEY RELEASED ME! I FELT MY BRAIN CRUMBLING--PERHAPS I WAS STARTING TO GO MAD--



LYING THERE, THINKING, LOST IN A SEA OF BLACK TIMELESSNESS... **UNABLE TO MOVE...** IT WAS AS IF AGES AND MILLENIUMS PASSED! THEN, AFTER INCALCULABLE TERRORS, I HEARD A **SPADE CUTTING INTO THE EARTH ABOVE ME!**



A GREAT UPSURGE OF JOY BURST WITHIN ME! EVERYTHING **HAD** GONE RIGHT, AFTER ALL! LORD, HOW WILD AND STRANGE ONE'S THOUGHT CAN GET! I FELT THE COFFIN BEING LIFTED, HEARD FAINTLY MUFFLED VOICES... IN A MOMENT, MY ORDEAL WOULD BE **OVER!**



AT LAST, AT LAST! THE LID OF THE COFFIN ROSE, AND ---WHO WERE THESE **STRANGERS?** WHY WERE THEY LOOKING AT ME WITH THAT HORRIFIED MIXTURE OF CURIOSITY AND REVULSION?



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the
man
from



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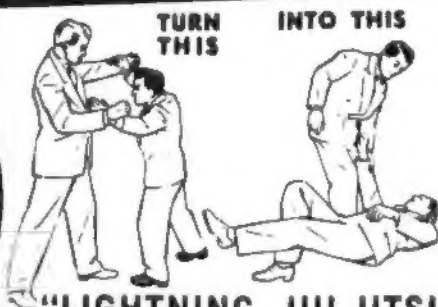
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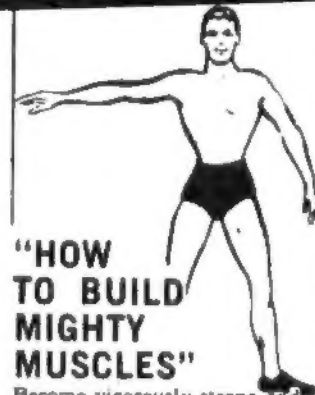
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TERRIBLY SORRY TO SUBJECT YOU TO THIS, MRS. AGUILA, BUT OUR COMPANY WAS VERY SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THIS CASE! YOUR FATHER TOOK OUT HEAVY INSURANCE ON A VERY SMALL INCOME AND DIED RIGHT AFTERWARDS! THE CHIEF THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING *PHONY*... WANTED US TO HAVE A LOOK!



I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY, GENTLEMEN! AFTER ALL, YOU WANTED TO BE SURE ABOUT THAT \$100,000! POOR FATHER, IF HE'D ONLY LIVED A WHILE LONGER!

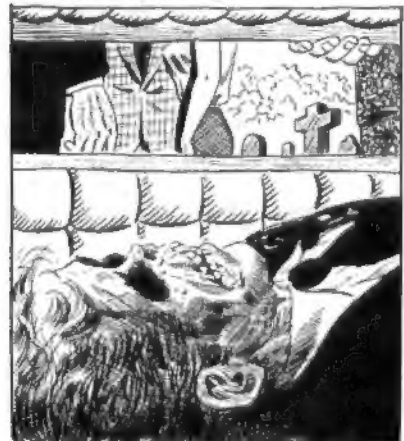
YES, HE WAS SO LOOKING FORWARD TO HESTER AND ME GETTING MARRIED!



WELL, WE'RE FINISHED HERE! GUESS WE'D BETTER RETURN THE COFFIN TO THE GRAVE--

POOR FATHER, SUCH A SHAME TO DISTURB HIS REST...

I WANTED TO SCREAM, TO RAVE, TO SHRIEK "NO, DON'T! DON'T! DON'T CLOSE THE LID AGAIN!" BUT I COULDN'T RAVE OR SHOUT OR SHRIEK! I COULDN'T TWITCH A VOCAL CORD! ALL I COULD DO WAS SUFFER IN SILENT HORROR AS THE LIGHT WAS SHUT OUT...



HESTER AND JUAN--THEY'D BETRAYED ME! THEY'D LEAPED AT THE CHANCE TO GET ME OUT OF THE WAY, KNOWING I'D NEVER HAVE PERMITTED THEIR MARRIAGE! I'D BEEN TAKEN IN BY THEIR HYPOCRITICAL OPPOSITION TO THE SCHEME... FOOL THAT I'D BEEN! THEY THOUGHT THEY'D BURIED ME ALIVE-- BUT NONE OF US KNEW THAT THE SECOND INJECTION HAD PUT ME IN A STATE OF PERMANENT CATALEPSIS-- BUT FOR MY FUNCTIONING BRAIN!



THE LIGHT WAS SHUT OUT FOREVER... THE COFFIN LID ETERNALLY SEALED! THERE WAS UTTER BLACKNESS AS I DESCENDED INTO THE PIT ONCE MORE... THE COLD DAMP GRAVE! AND NOW I CAN ONLY WAIT FOR THE WORMS, FOR THE AWFUL PROCESSES OF DEATH TO REACH MY BRAIN... BECAUSE MAYBE THEN I CAN STOP THINKING... AND BE FREE OF THIS HORROR! BUT WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THE AWFUL PROCESS OF THOUGHT WILL GO ON IN THIS WET BLACK PIT-- FOREVER...

